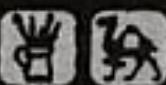


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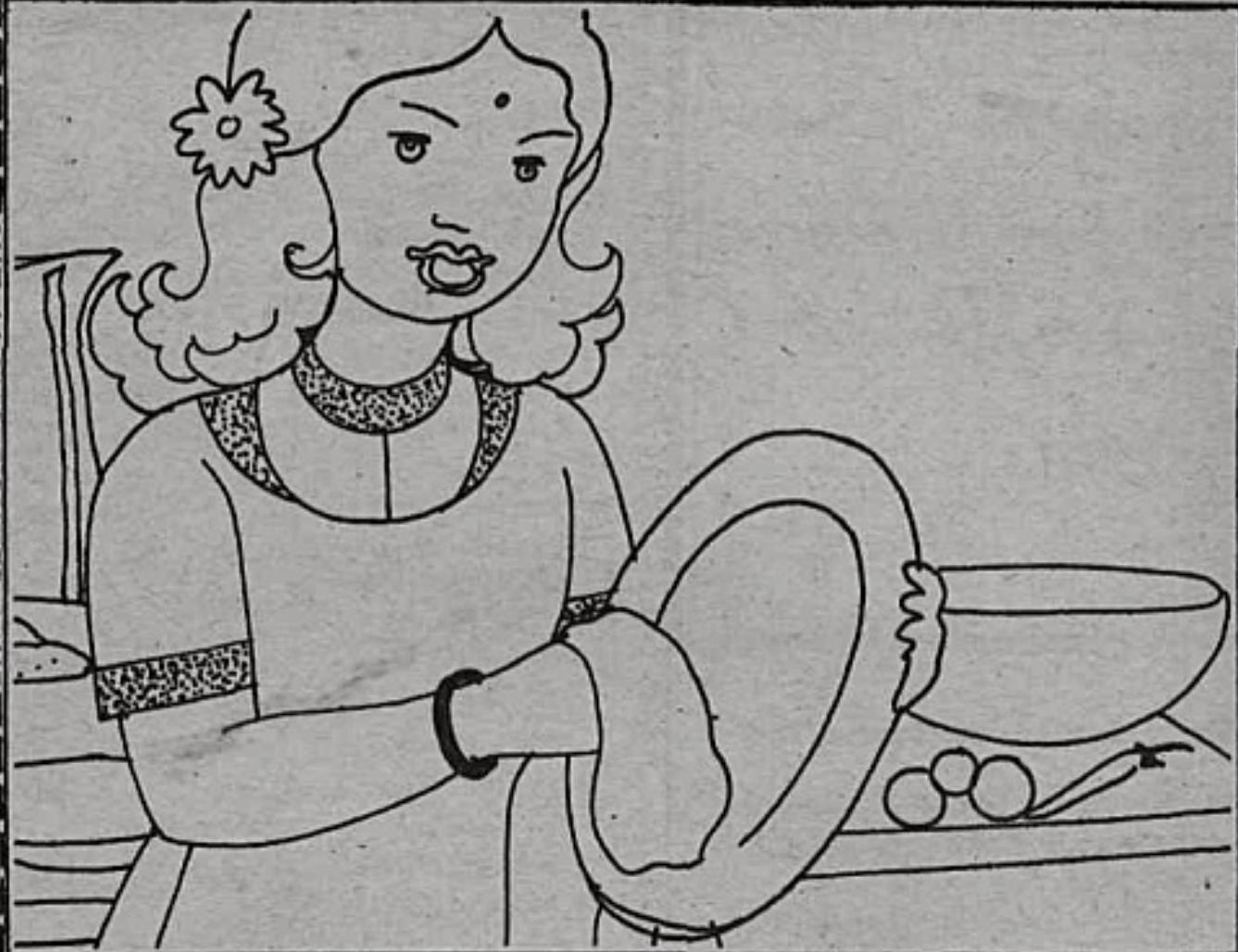
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CONTEST NO.39

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- * *Message of the Gita—in Story of Krishna*
- * *"The Zig Zag Yamuna"—in Rivers of India*
- * *The Power of the Pyramid—Unsolved Mysteries*
- The Kangaroo Dance—An Australian Folk-tale*
- * *The Tell-Tale Trails*

Thoughts to be Treasured

"Mother India is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a God-head."

—**Sri Aurobindo**

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CHANDAMAMA

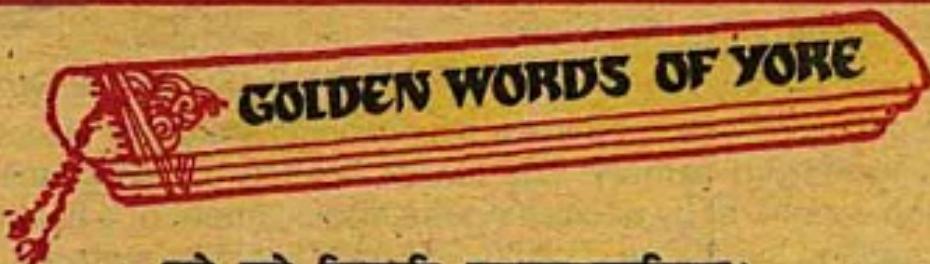
Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI
Founder: CHAKRAPANI

THE RIVERS OF INDIA

The contribution of great rivers to the making of civilizations can never be exaggerated. The very name of our country, India, is derived from a river, the Sindhu.

For the Indians the rivers are important not only because they have moulded the country's history or because they are a great part of its heritage, but also because they have been looked upon as deities. The rivers of India are an intrinsic part of India's spiritual tradition. Their place in our literature, folklore, religious practices, festivals and rites is unique. In no other country the rivers play a comparable role in the life of its people.

Beginning with this issue, we present the story of India's rivers through pictures.



यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्तिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

*Yato yato niścarati manascañcalamasthiram
Tatastato niyamyaitadātmanyeva vaśam nayet*

The mind must be withdrawn from all such objects that keep it ever fickle and wavering and be brought under the control of the spirit.

— *The Gita*



LET US KNOW

What are the names of the Sikh Gurus?

—Satish Kumar, Baroda.

After Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, the following were the Gurus of the Sikhs.

Angad (1538–52); Amardas (1552–74); Ramdas (1574–81); Arjan (1581–1606); Hargovind (1606–45); Har Rai (1645–61); Har Kishan (1661–64); Tej Bahadur (1664–75) and Govind Singh (1675–1708).

Who got the first Nobel Prize, for what and when?

—Sarada Hariharan, Calcutta.

The first Nobel Prize was given away on Dec. 10, 1901, the fifth anniversary of its founder Alfred Bernhard Nobel's death. It was given to Wilhelm Konrad Rontgen (1845–1923, Germany) for his discovery of X-rays.

How does a submarine function?

—S. Subak Tageen, Adoni.

The basic principles of a submarine's functioning are those discovered by Archimedes in the 3rd century. The law of floating bodies states that by increasing the weight, or by decreasing the displacement of a floating body, it could be made to submerge. The floating body could be surfaced again by reversing this process.

It was in the year 1605 that the first submarine was successfully built and tested by a Dutch inventor, Cornelis Drebbel.

What is the difference between a bay and a gulf?

—Tico Rodrigues, Goa.

Gulf is an arm of the sea extending into the land. Bay is an inlet of the sea with a wider opening than a gulf, forming an inward bend of the shore.

Do You Know?

There are many claims to fatness. But the fattest man authentically recorded was Robert Earl of Illinois. He was born eleven and half pounds and was 203 pounds at the age of six. In 1958, when he had just crossed 30, he weighed 1,069 pounds, with a 124 inch-long waist-line. That year he fell ill, but the hospital door was not big enough for him to pass through it. He died in a trailer outside the hospital. His large coffin had to be lowered into the earth by a crane.

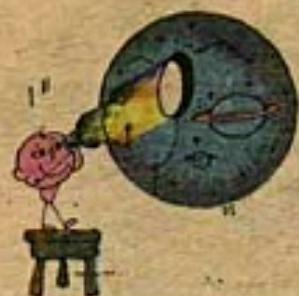


The briefest correspondence in history is a letter from the great French writer Victor Hugo and the reply to it from his publishers. Hugo's letter was "?" He meant to know how his newly published novel *Les Misérables* was faring in the market. The publishers' reply was "!"

A man of Poland, Siegmund Breitbart gave an incredible example of dental power on 27 November 1923. He controlled the reigns of a team of horses which were pulling a wagon containing 50 people through Washington, not by his hands, but by his teeth!



NEWS FLASH



Asia's Largest Telescope

The largest telescope in Asia (including Japan) has been made at Walchandnagar in India. It is to be used by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics of the Civil Aviation Ministry. The 230 cm telescope is 15.7 meters long, 8.7 metres wide and 11.7 metres high.

How to live a Hundred Years

106-year-old Omar Bedan of Muar, South Malaysia, says that to live for hundred years and over is not difficult for one who never gets impatient, never fails to keep his assurance, never speaks a lie and never borrows.



The Honest Orphan

This is not the story of any Hollywood film!

17-year old Eric De Wilde, an orphan of Hollywood, U.S.A., loved to wander in lonely places. That is what he was doing late one afternoon when he found a bag lying near a bush. He opened it and found it full of jewels. He deposited it in the Police Station. The police notified the public of the find. 1,400 people came forward with the claim that the bag was theirs! But not one of them could prove it!

According to the law of the state of Florida, the bag was returned to Eric. On his behalf the jewels are being sold and he has received money equal to Rs 3500000.00. More is to come.

Had Eric kept the bag without informing the police, he would have forfeited everything.



(Krishna, who had become a friend of the Pandavas, helped them to build a magnificent new capital that came to be called Indaprashta. The Kauravas grew jealous of the prosperity of the Pandavas and invited Yudhishthira to a game of dice. Yudhishthira was defeated treacherously and the Kauravas tried to humiliate Draupadi.)

THE SPECTRE OF WAR LOOMS LARGE

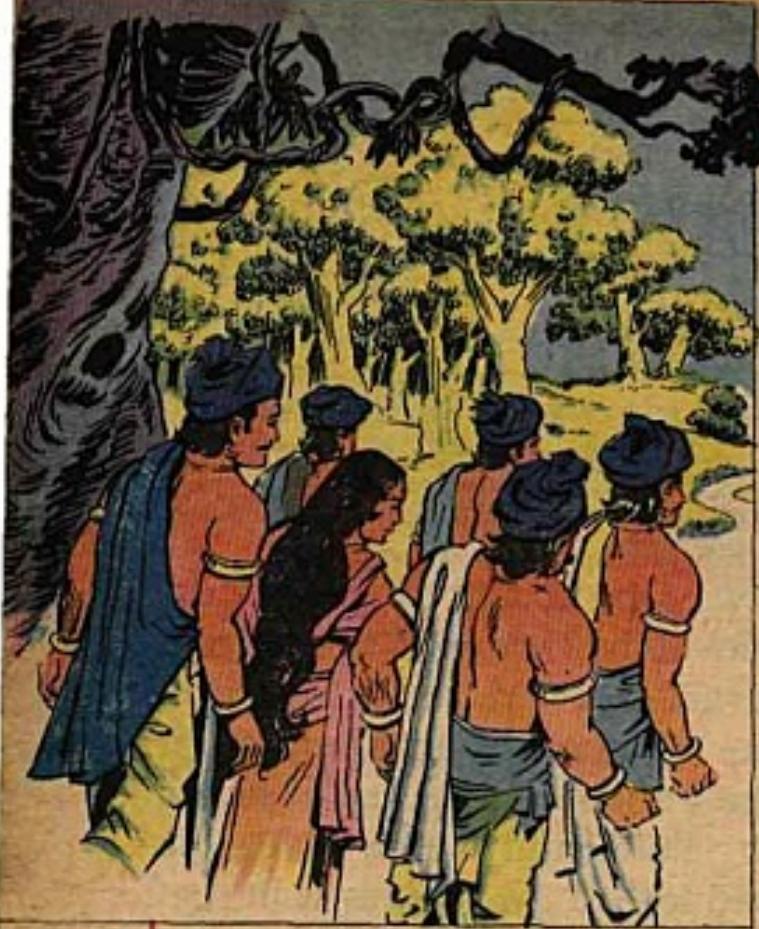
The Kauravas desired to humiliate the Pandavas to the maximum possible degree. That is why they had dragged Draupadi into their court. But the outcome of their wicked action was quite different. Krishna's Grace protected Draupadi. Those who were even a little sensible, understood how a true devotee is

always protected by the Divine. Moved by Draupadi's plight and afraid of severe public criticism, the old king Dhritarashtra set the Pandavas free and restored to Yudhishthira everything he had lost to the Kauravas in that treacherous game of dice.

So, practically it is Draupadi who saved the situation.

But the situation did not re-





main unchanged for long. The wicked Duryodhana once again challenged Yudhishthira to the game and once again Yudhishthira sat for it because to shy away from any challenge was against his principle.

Through the same wicked means Shakuni, the villain, defeated him. This time the Pandavas not only lost their kingdom, but also were obliged to live in exile for twelve years. What was more, they were required to spend the thirteenth year in such a manner that their whereabouts should remain totally unknown. If they were found out, they must live in

exile for yet another period of twelve years!

Along with Draupadi the Pandavas went into exile. Through great hardships they spent the twelve years in the forest and, as the thirteenth year approached, they took employment in the household of King Virat of Matsya under different names and even disguises.

King Virat had incurred the wrath of the Kauravas. One day his territory was attacked on two fronts, Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma and Drona leading the invaders.

King Virat went to repel the invaders, but was taken prisoner by them. It was not possible for the Pandavas to look on passively while the king who had granted them shelter was humiliated. So Bhima dashed into the battlefield to meet the enemy on one front and Arjuna led the army to the other front. The Kauravas, who dreamt of a simple walk over, were surprised to encounter stiff opposition. Soon Bhima succeeded in snatching King Virat from their hands. The Kauravas were routed. They had captured a large herd of cattle that be-

longed to King Virat. In haste they abandoned it and fled.

The Kauravas were clever enough to understand that those who defeated them were not the generals of King Virat. There were only a few heroes who could confront warriors like Bhishma and Drona and they were the Pandava brothers, Bhima and Arjuna in particular.

So, if the Kauravas were defeated, they were also happy that they had found out the Pandavas. This chance discovery might compel the Pandavas to spend another twelve years in the forest!

But the encounter took place just when the thirteenth year had come to an end. There was no harm in the Pandavas now announcing their identity. King Virat was delighted. The news spread far and wide. Jubilant friends of the Pandavas came to meet them.

But their future was still uncertain. Will Duryodhana, who had enjoyed their share of the kingdom all these years, now agree to part with it?

It would be wise to remain prepared for a war—if that cannot be avoided—thought Yudhisthira. The moment the

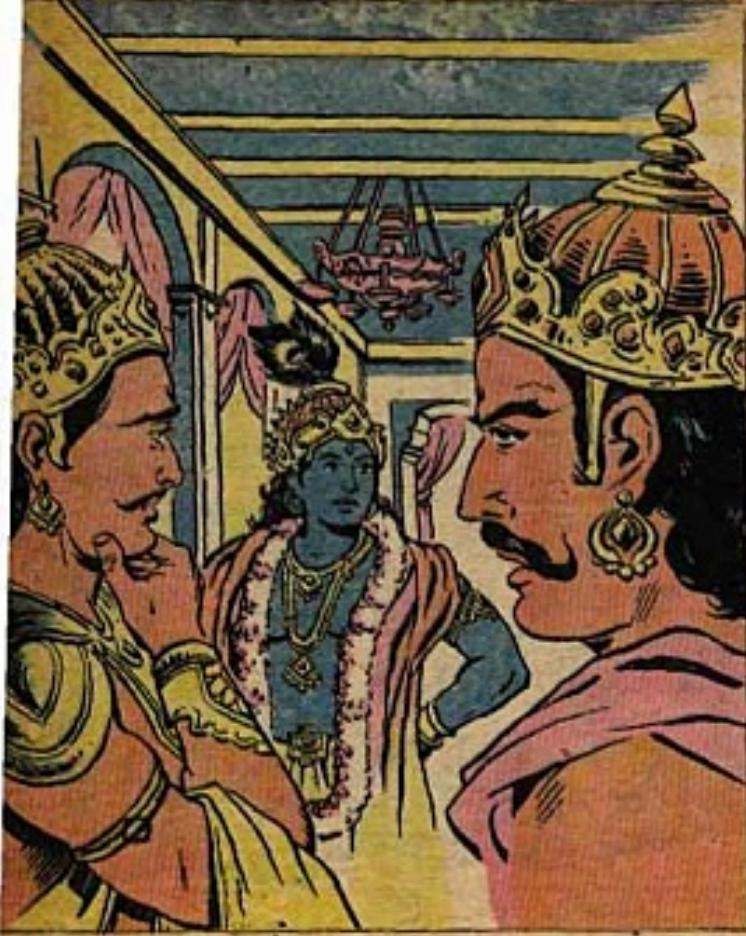


possibility of war came to his mind, he began thinking of possible allies.

No wonder that he should think of Krishna as his first and foremost ally. He despatched Arjuna to Dwaraka to seek his support.

Arjuna entered the portals of Krishna's castle and headed towards his room. Nobody stopped him, for all knew the affection in which Krishna held him.

Whom should he see inside Krishna's room but Duryodhana seated in a bejewelled chair near Krishna's head! Duryodhana was waiting for Krishna to wake up from sleep.



Arjuna took seat, quietly, at Krishna's feet.

Krishna opened his eyes and saw Arjuna first and saw Duryodhana next. Both had come with the same purpose: to be assured of Krishna's support in the event of a war.

"I came before Arjuna. Hence my claim on your favour is greater," asserted Duryodhana.

"Maybe, but I saw Arjuna first. Hence I am morally bound to entertain his request too. One thing is certain. I will never fight in the battle personally. All I can do is to help one of you in some way without myself

taking up arms. However, as you know, I own a powerful army called the Narayani Sena. If I join one camp my army can join the other. Since Arjuna is younger of you two, he ought to be given the chance to choose between my army and myself," said Krishna.

Before Duryodhana had said anything, Arjuna eagerly put forth his choice: "I have no need of your army. Let me have your support!"

"Even though I will not fight?"

"Yes, my friend and my master, even though you will not fight!" confirmed Arjuna.

Duryodhana's face beamed with joy. This is certainly what he wanted! Of what use could be an unarmed friend in a battle? How foolish it was of Arjuna not to choose Krishna's famous army!

Krishna looked at Duryodhana. "It is all right with me, Krishna, I'd be happy to have your army!" he said.

"I'm happy that both of you are satisfied!" said Krishna.

But neither Yudhisthira nor any of his brothers was very keen on possessing a kingdom. They wanted peace. They would

be happy to get only five villages for their sustenance. That would prove that their right to rule was acknowledged.

They sent an emissary to Hastinapura. And the emissary was none other than Krishna.

The old king Dhritarashtra ordered for a royal reception to Krishna. Welcome arches were erected and musicians played their instruments in honour of the visitor. But Krishna did not pay much attention to them. He looked grave, quite doubtful about the success of his mission.

He would have looked even more grave had he an inkling of the nasty plot Duryodhana was entertaining in his mind. Duryodhana, in fact, would have very much liked to throw Krishna into gaol and thereby give the most terrible shock to the Pandavas. Little did he

know that Krishna was prepared for the worst. His army was camping in a jungle a little away from Hastinapura. He had his bodyguards with him who would have signalled the army to act had any courtesy been shown to Krishna.

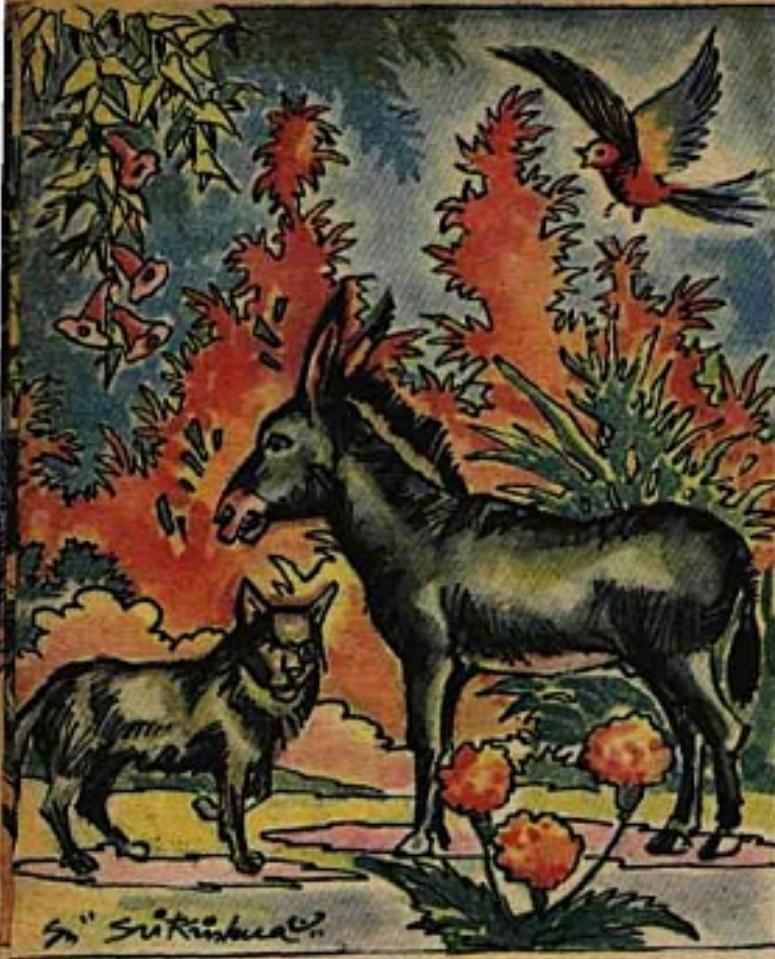
Duryodhana's wicked proposal, however, was spurned by Dhritarashtra.

As feared by Krishna, his plea for peaceful coexistence between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was rudely rejected by Duryodhana. "They want five villages, is it? I refuse to grant them even the area of earth a needle's point can accommodate!" were his last words on the issue.

That decided it. The die had been cast for the great Mahabharata War.

-- To Continue





“Sukhbaatar”

An Ukrainian Tale

The Foolish Wolf

where the priest's mare is grazing and eat her."

The wolf thanked him for the good idea and went at once to the meadow where, indeed, the mare was grazing peacefully.

"Good morning, mare," he said in a most polite voice.

"Good morning," said the mare, "What do you want here?"

"The farmer has said I could eat you," replied the wolf.

The mare understood that the wolf was not very intelligent.

"Very well then," she said, "I suggest that you start eating me from the tail, so that by the time you come to my stomach, I can continue to eat and fill it up a little more."

The wolf was dazed by this brilliant idea. He went and stood behind the mare thinking of how he could get a good grip on her tail. But the mare kicked him so hard with her hind legs that he fell ten yards away.

The wolf got up, rubbed his joints and went back to the

Wolves are known for their clever ways and for their skill in hunting. But there was once, in a small forest, a wolf who was not only very foolish but very lazy too.

One day he decided that instead of taking the trouble of hunting for a prey he would go and ask the farmer, who lived close to the forest, to give him something to eat.

He went to the farmhouse and said in a very sweet voice:

"Good morning, kind farmer, could you give me something to eat?"

"I'm very busy," replied the farmer. "Go to the meadow

farmer.

"Please give me something to eat," he pleaded again.

"Wasn't the mare enough for you?" asked the farmer.

"Let's not talk of the mare," said the wolf, wincing at the very mention of the name. "I've never been kicked so hard in my life."

"Well, then go and eat the ram. He is grazing on the hillock over there," the farmer said.

The wolf went to the hillock and saw the ram busy nibbling at the shrubs.

"Good morning, ram," said the wolf with an air of impertinence.

"Good morning," bleated the ram. "And what is your business here?"

"I have come to eat you," answered the wolf.

"Very well," said the ram, "Why don't you go and stand at the foot of the hill and open your mouth as wide as you can. Then I'll jump straight into it and you can gobble me at one go."

The wolf could hardly wait a minute. He rushed down the hill and stood there opening his mouth so wide that it looked like a well.



The ram came charging down and knocked the wolf so hard with his horns that the poor wolf went rolling like a ball.

Once again he rubbed himself and went back to the farmer begging for something to eat.

"It's you again!" cried the farmer. "This time do as I tell you and don't come back to bother me. Look, under that tree there's a pig sleeping. Go and eat him."

The wolf went there at once and without much ceremony told the pig that he wanted to eat him.

"What a silly idea!" exclaimed the pig. "Do you know

I could be of much help to you? Maybe I could change your destiny altogether. Jump on to my back and I'll take you to a village where they are going to choose a chief to rule them. I'm sure that if they saw you they would choose you at once."

The wolf was dumb with joy. Without wasting a moment he hopped onto the pig's back and they went towards the village.

The pig took him to the centre of the market place and began to grunt very loudly.

"Why are you making such a lot of noise?" whispered the wolf.

"So that the people can see

you," replied the pig, and began to grunt more loudly.

The villagers, when they saw the wolf sitting on top of the pig, thought that he had caught him and was going to eat him. They gathered together with their sticks and pitchforks and began to beat the wolf.

When it was all over, the wolf got up, rubbed himself, and with his tail between his legs, went back to the forest. On the way he made up his mind that from the next day he would go and hunt for himself, rather than go and ask the farmer or anyone else for something to eat.





THE SELECTION

Dhananjay was a leading businessman of Amberpet town. At the end of every month he used to go to the city and purchase the necessary goods required for his shop. He needed someone to help him in these purchases as well as for looking after the shop.

He requested his brother Mrityunjay to oblige him with someone who could be fully trusted and was intelligent enough to carry out the work. His brother sent him the next day two young men named Sisir and Sheshank.

More than half an hour passed before Dhananjay came out of his house with a big bag on his shoulder. He told the young men, "I am sorry for the delay. In any case, I will not be able to talk to you today, as I have to attend urgently to some work at

the town of Malakpet. Please come tomorrow at this hour."

"It is all right, Sir," said Sheshank. "But, Sir, please be very careful with your money when you go to the town of Malakpet. There are many thieves in that town. It is not a safe place at all. I have been there three times and thrice I was robbed."

"I shall be careful with the money and my belongings. But, tell me Sheshank, how is the food in the hotels of that town?" asked Dhananjay.

"It is very unhygienic, Sir," replied Sheshank. "The hotels are dirty and the food is very spicy. Each time I returned from Malakpet, I took ill for two to three days," explained Sheshank.

"What is your opinion about Malakpet, Sisir?" asked Dha-

nanjay, moving closer to him.

"I have also been to Malakpet a few times and I agree with Sheshank's views. I too lost my money once. I would have lost again had I not been extremely careful with my purse!"

"Have you ever taken food at the hotels of Malakpet?" asked Dhananjay.

"Yes, Sir. But only once. As it was very unhygienic I carried my own food from the second visit onwards. Or else, I would take my meals at my brother-in-law's house that is on the suburbs of the town," replied Sisir.

"Thank you, young men, for your kind advice. Now I should be on my way to Malakpet. We will meet later." Saying so, Dhananjay left the house.

That night, Dhananjay went to Mrityunjay's house and told him that he had selected Sisir

and that he would like to employ him from the very next day. Mrityunjay was very eager to know how Dhananjay had selected Sisir.

"It was easy," explained Dhananjay. "Both of them had the same experiences. But, Sisir learnt his lesson and safeguarded himself, where-as, Sheshank was not intelligent enough to learn from his previous experiences. And, I need someone sharp, shrewd and courageous like Sisir."

Mrityunjay informed Sisir that he was selected by Dhananjay and that he could join him the next day. At the same time, he promised Sheshank that he would look for another job for him.

Everyone felt happy and contented.

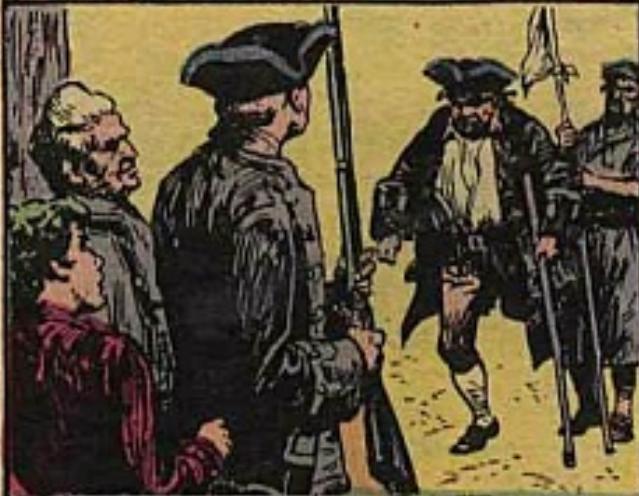


Treasure Island

While wandering around Treasure Island, young Jim Hawkins meets a marooned sailor named Ben Gunn. When Gunn is scared off by a cannon ball from the ship, Jim makes his way alone through the jungle until he suddenly comes across an old enclosure, where he finds his friends Squire Trelawney and Dr. Livesey waiting for him.



During their flight, the Squire's gamekeeper, Redruth had been wounded, and had died of his wounds inside the enclosure where he had been given a Christian burial. After I had listened to the Squire's story, I ate a small ration of pork, and retired to sleep. Early in the morning, I was awakened by someone calling out, "Flag of truce!" Joining the others at the gate I saw Silver and another man standing outside.



"Here it is," said Silver. "Give us the chart to get the treasure, and we'll offer you a choice. Either you come aboard with us, once the treasure is shipped, and I'll give you my word of honour to put you safe ashore. Or we'll divide stores and you stay here. I'll send the first ship we sight to pick you up."

"I'll answer that short and sweet," said the Captain, "If you come up one by one, I'll clap you in irons and take you home for a fair trial. If you won't, I'll put a bullet in you the next time we meet." Silver's eyes started from his head with wrath. "Before an hour's out, you'll laugh upon the other side of your face. Them that die will be the lucky ones."





With a dreadful oath, Silver stumbled off. Soon after, the pirates attacked, waving their cutlasses and guns. From a safe distance, well out of harm's way, Silver was urging them on.

Despite our efforts to repel them they were soon swarming over the walls like monkeys. We fired again and yet again, and three men fell.



In the end we gave a good account of ourselves that the battle changed in our favour. A pirate who had managed to escape our fire threw himself at me, cutlass flashing. Then the Squire came to my rescue.





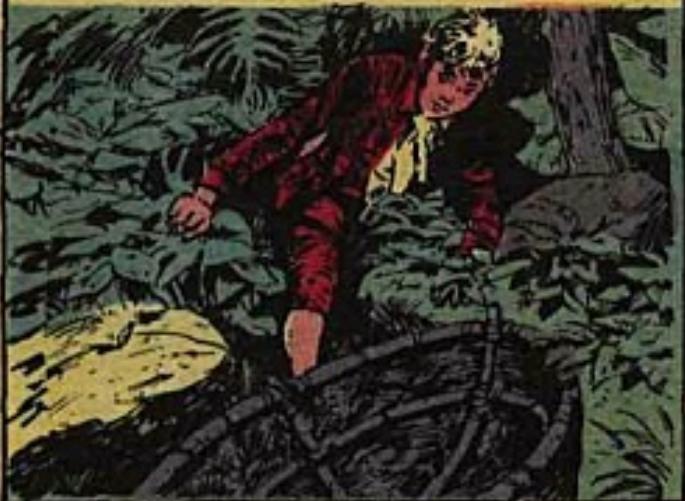
Finally the victory was ours. But it had been bought at a price. One of the Squires' servants had been killed, another injured and the captain wounded. After he had tended the wounded, Dr. Livesey went off in search of Ben Gunn, about whom I had had time to tell before retiring to sleep the night before.

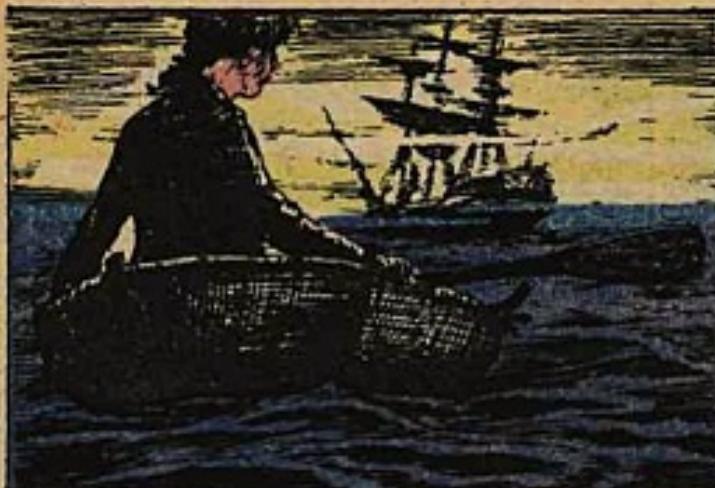
After the Doctor had gone, I determined to do something on my own account. At this stage I had nothing else in mind but to go down to the anchorage to see what was happening on board the Hispaniola. Laying hold of a brace of pistols, and putting some sea biscuits in my pocket, I slipped away unseen from the stockade.



Treading my way through the woods, I was soon conscious of cool draughts of air, and a little later I saw the sea lying blue and sunny to the horizon, with the Hispaniola lying nearby at anchor.

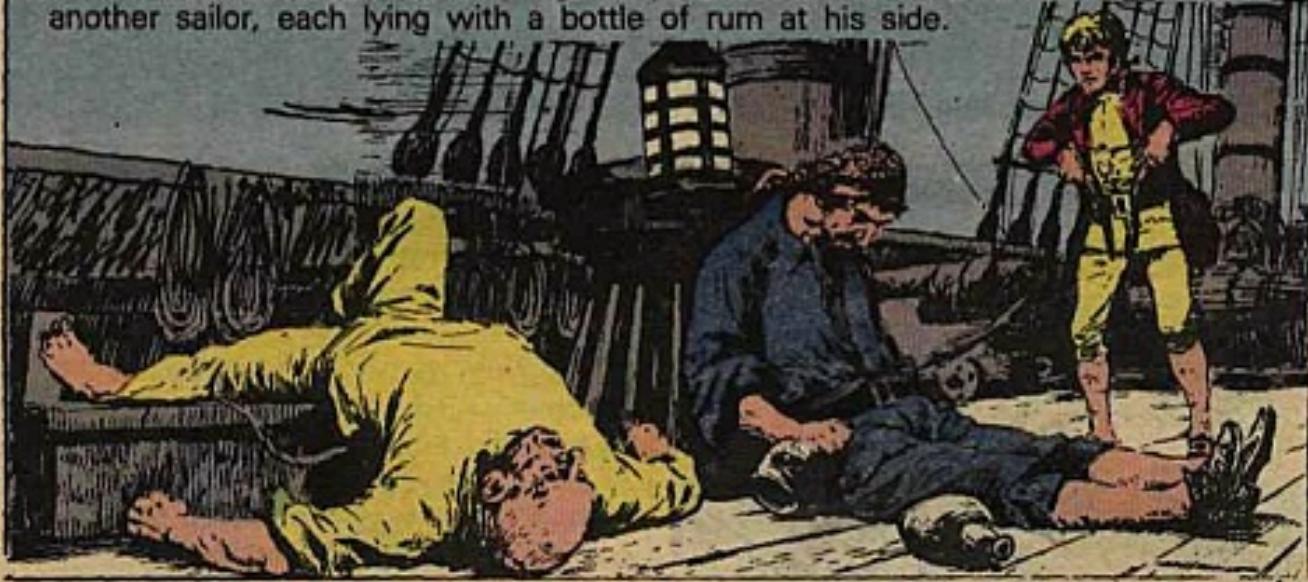
Moving into the shelter of some bushes, I made an unexpected discovery. Dropping in a hollow I came across a home-made boat. I guessed it had been made by Ben Gunn, and it was the worst boat ever made by man. But for all that, I knew that it would serve my purpose.





I settled down to wait for the darkness, filling in some of the time by making a hearty meal of biscuit. When the night did come, it brought with it a fog which enshrouded the heavens. Shouldering the little boat, I stumbled down to the beach where I placed the craft in the water and boarded her. After rowing for some time, I saw faintly through the darkness the outline of the Hispaniola.

Within a few minutes, I was almost on top of the schooner. A plank was over my head. I sprang to my feet and within a few more minutes I had gained a position on the plank. I then pulled myself along it on to the deck where I found Israel Hands and another sailor, each lying with a bottle of rum at his side.



Looking closely, I saw that the sailor was dead, and I assumed that Hands had killed him in a drunken brawl. At that moment, Hands came around.

—To Continue

ADVENTURES OF PRINCE AJIB

I am Prince Ajib and strange is my story. When I was in my teens, one day I heard an astrologer telling my father, "Your son is destined to cause someone's death in a month."

"How unfortunate! Tell me, O Sage, how can my son evade this misfortune of becoming a killer?" asked my father.

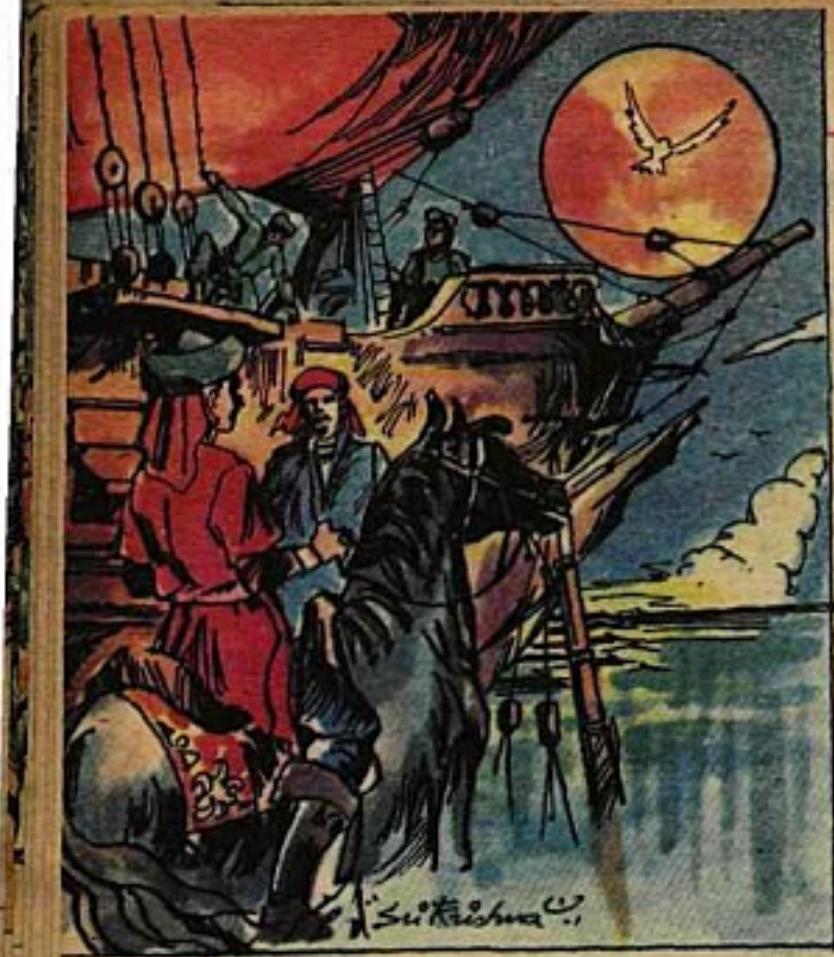
"Only one thing can change man's destiny and that is God's compassion. You must pray for your son as much as your son

should pray for himself," advised the astrologer.

My father did not know that I had overheard their conversation. He did not tell me of the prophecy. But from that very day he kept me under strict supervision. He did not let me go out to play as and when I liked, nor did he let my friends come and meet me freely. Time and again he asked me to pray!

This I did not like. I had no inclination to pray and I did not





believe that I could cause death to somebody. The restrictions my father put on me annoyed me very much.

One night I escaped from the palace and did not stop until my horse took me to the harbour. I saw a foreign ship preparing to leave the harbour. I met the captain and greeted him warmly and expressed a desire to sail with him.

"I don't object having an able-bodied young man in my ship if he is willing to assist me," said the captain.

I promised to be obedient and he took me in. We sailed forth early in the morning. I was

thrilled to be in the vast sea and I dreamt of unknown lands and unknown pleasures.

After a week a strong cyclone struck us. We could not keep our ship in our control. Wild wind pushed it far into the waters, away from its designed course.

After a few days the rain subsided and the sky was clear. I was happy to locate a hill on the horizon. I called out for the captain who was worried because we were running out of drinking water and food.

"We can lay at anchor along this shore and gather water and food," said I, drawing his attention to the hill.

"We can," said the captain happily, but the very next moment his face paled and he shouted out to his crew, "Take the ship away from the magnet mountain!"

"What is a magnet mountain, sir?" I asked.

The captain had no time to answer.

We did our best to change the course of our ship. But to my horror I saw the bolts, screws, nails and poles, anything made of iron, getting loose. We had already come within the range

of the mountain's magnetic pull over iron. Soon, like arrows, the iron elements of our ship shot towards the mountain. The frame of the ship got loose and began to fall apart.

There were heart-rending cries, but in no time all became silent. The ship disappeared; its inmates were all drowned.

I lay on a plank and, after an hour's rowing with my arms, reached the mountain.

I saw that it was a small island. There was nothing on it save the mountain, not even a blade of grass which I could chew to appease my hunger.

It was certain that I would

die. No ship was to be seen anywhere around. No ship was likely to come there because everybody avoided the mountain.

I decided to lie down, waiting for death. I was shivering in cold. I found a sheepskin coat lying on a rock. Perhaps it belonged to some mariner who had been flung on the island some day in the past.

I put on the coat and buttoned it well and lay asleep.

I woke up with a jerk and saw myself going up! I understood that a giant eagle, known as the Rukh, was carrying me away. The sheepskin must have temp-





ted it.

At first I decided to wriggle out of the coat and fall into the sea. But I changed my mind. Once sure that I was going to die anyway, I decided to wait and see.

The eagle rose quite high and then descended on another island. It was a much bigger island, green with tall bushy trees and a hill.

Scarcely had the eagle put me down on the hill when I rolled down and reached the foot of the hill. Then I stood up, threw away the sheepskin and began to run. The eagle swooped down on the sheepskin and flew

away with it.

I found a ripe jackfruit and ate it to my heart's content. There was also a stream nearby to quench my thirst. Then I climbed the tallest tree to have a wide glimpse of the island.

To my great joy I saw a small ship casting anchor on the shore. I was about to run towards it, but I checked myself. Who knows if it did not belong to pirates? They might enslave me!

I waited atop the tree. Soon an old man, looking like a king, and a young man, probably his son emerged from the ship. They were followed by a number of men who appeared to be their bodyguards.

They stopped under a tree that was not far from mine. Under it there was a slab of stone. They removed the slab and a staircase was revealed. They disappeared into it.

I waited quite confounded. After an hour they came out—all but one. They shut the passage with the slab and moved away slowly. The king was seen wiping his eyes.

The one left behind was the young man.

They boarded the ship and

the ship sailed away.

I climbed down. "I must save the young man who remains underground, unless they have already killed him," I told myself. I removed the slab and took the staircase.

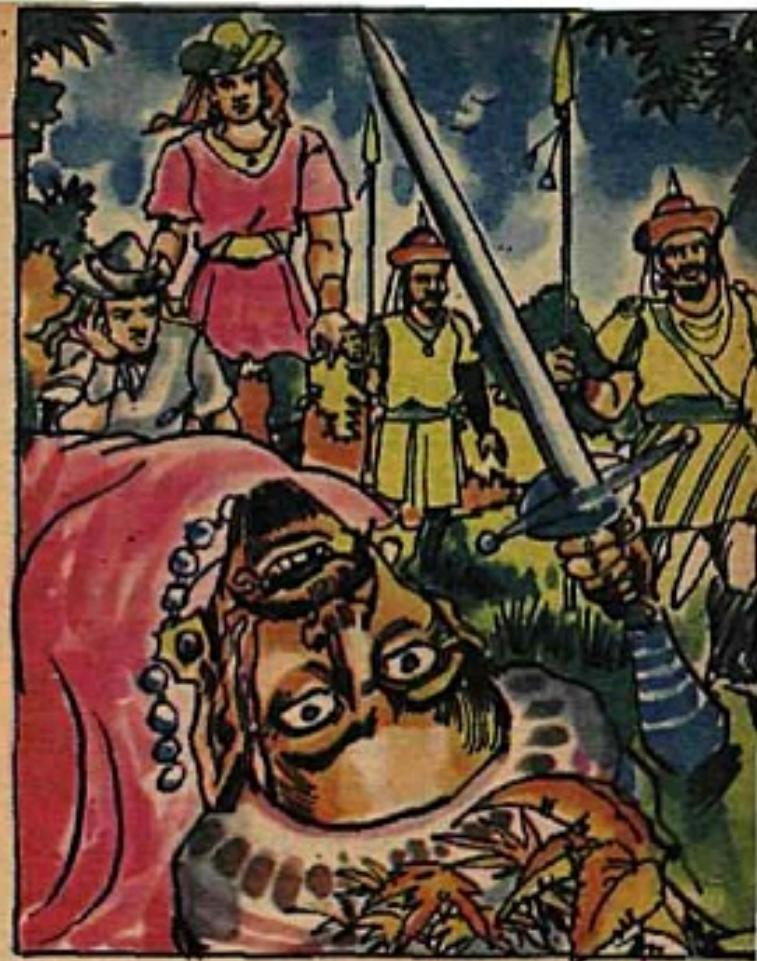
At the bottom of the staircase spread a large hall, well furnished and lighted with candles. In a corner, leaning against a bejewelled bolster, sat the young man, reading a book.

As soon as his eyes fell on me he cried out in fear. I knelt down before him and said that he had no fear from me. He recovered his calm. I told him all about my adventure, but did not tell him the prophecy which set me forth into the wide world.

He was happy. "For some strange reason, known to my father, I have to live here for three weeks after which my father, the king, will come to take me. I was expected to be alone. But that is so distressing! I am happy to get you for a companion!" he said.

We lived happily. The delicious food stored for the prince would have sufficed for a whole family for a month!

Days passed. "One day more



and I will go back home. You must accompany me and remain with me forever, well?" the prince asked me excitedly.

Next day some strange thought came to his mind. He said, "My friend, I will play a prank on my father. When you hear the slab being shifted, stand at the bottom of the staircase holding a dagger in your hands. My father would think that you are a bandit who has finished me off! I will be behind you to give a hearty laugh at his discomfiture!"

I had no objection to this. The moment we heard the sound of the slab being re-

moved, I stood at the staircase, feigning a sinister look and holding a dagger.

The first to see me was the old king. He gave out a cry and fell down. Myself and his son ran up to him. His own ministers and bodyguards lifted him up. He was carried to the open. But he was found to have died of shock!

His chief minister sighed and said, "Alas! There was a prophecy that within a fortnight the prince would either get killed by someone or cause his father's death. The king, naturally, was more concerned about his son than himself. So he kept him in safety here, but, the prank invented by the prince killed him."

Said another minister, "We told the king that the time was not yet past. He should wait till

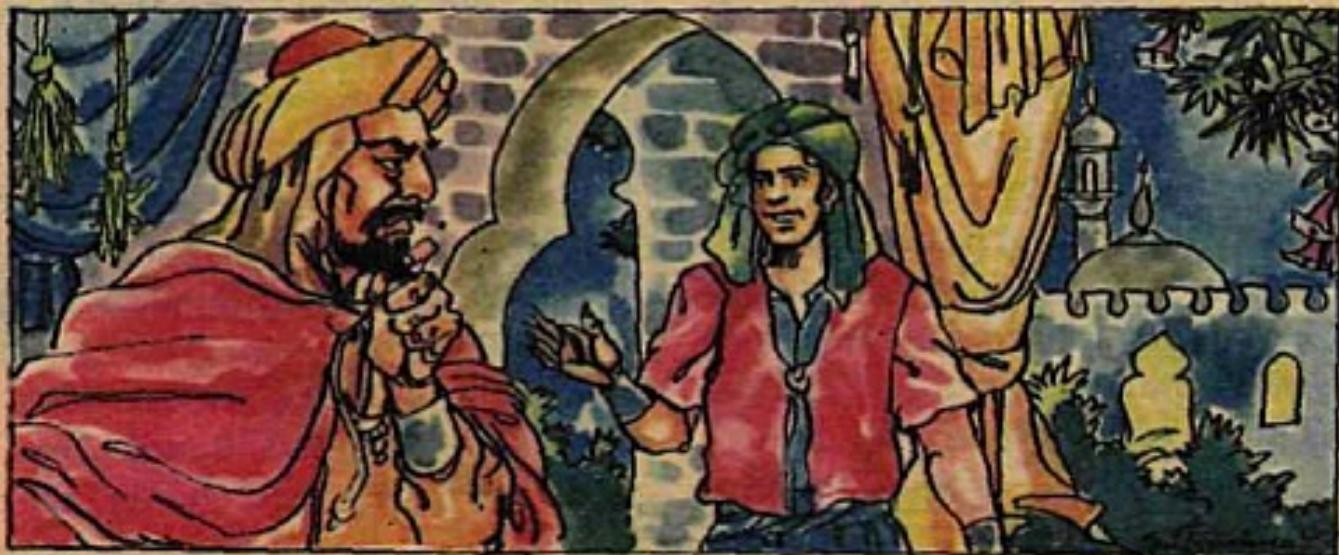
tomorrow. But he calculated it differently and was too impatient to wait."

Said the chief minister again, "It was good in a way. Had the prince died, the king would have died too. That would have been a much bigger tragedy!"

Little did they suspect that I was also fulfilling a prophecy!

Through the prince's courtesy, I returned home. I told my father everything and then said in conclusion, "Father, because you were praying for me, I was saved the sin of knowingly killing somebody. Had I listened to you and prayed myself, I would have been saved the shock of even unknowingly causing someone's death."

"You have grown wiser. That is some consolation, my son!" said my father.



THE PRINCE AND THE HOLY MAN

There was a prince who was deeply interested in the study of scriptures. He was humble and courteous to all who were known to be seekers of truth.

One day a holy man met him. "Dear Prince," said the holy man, "It is time for you to have a guru. That will lead you along the right path. I can assure you that I have achieved enough to be your guide. If you so wish, I can give demonstration of my merit."

"Really? What kind of demonstration can you give, O holy man?" asked the curious prince.

"I can remain buried under the earth for days together; I can live under waters for days at a stretch too and, for your confidential information, I can even fly! I have achieved these feats through strenuous practice of Yogic and Tantric principles for years!" stated the holy man.

"Your achievements are im-



pressive. But there are many others I know who can perform these feats. They are right here. Why not I accept them as my guru?" asked the prince.

The holy man looked surprised and agitated. "I challenge you to show them to me!" he shouted.

"Come on, Sir," said the prince quietly. He led the holy man into his garden.

He dug a little into the earth and showed a worm. "Look here, sir, this can remain under the earth for years, what to speak of days." Drawing the holy man's attention to his

pond, he said, "Look at those fish and that tortoise. They can remain under the water all their life." Then pointing at a bird, he said, "Here is the one who can perform the other feat; it can fly!"

The holy man stood speechless.

"Sir, what I need is to feel ever close to God. That is the only feat I care for. I have no need for powers which creatures inferior to man possess!" explained the prince.

The holy man knelt down before him and said, "I have met my guru!"





The Divine Remedy

When, after many years, the king and the queen of Malapur had their first baby girl, they hated their child just because it did not have long black hair and small white teeth!

"If the people of my kingdom come to know of this ugly child, they will all laugh at us!" said the king angrily.

The ministers, of course, tried to make the king understand that it was very normal that a new born baby does not have any teeth or locks of hair!

"As she grows up, she will have lovely long hair like the queen and her teeth will be like radiant dew drops," said one of the ministers.

"Do not try to console me with sweet talk! I want the best physicians of the land to be called immediately and a good medicine found to cure my

baby-girl's defects," ordered the king in all his wrath.

All kinds of physicians gathered in the palace and had a look at the new born baby.

"Maharaj, what you are asking for is an impossibility. It is..." they were telling when the king burst in with his fury.

"How dare you disobey the orders of a king, a mighty king at that," roared the king. "If you cannot cure my girl immediately, I'll have all of you whipped black and blue."

The physicians were all aghast. They seemed to have no choice but to get the whips.

The king returned after five minutes and thundered, "What is your decision? To cure my daughter or to be whipped?"

The physicians kept mum. Then, a minute later, an old physician came forward.



He said, "Maharaj, I am ready to cure your daughter, but, I need some time."

"I can give everything but not time!" replied the king in fury.

"Maharaj, I require time not because I am lazy at work. I want time because I have to gather four hundred different kinds of special roots and mix them well with five hundred and fifty five different petals of wild flowers. Then only can I make the divine remedy for your daughter," said the old man.

"I will send my whole army to collect all that you need," replied the king, impatiently.

"They will not be able to recognise the plants, I'll send

my own men," said the old man.

"All right. But, If you cannot cure her with your divine remedy, then you will be beheaded," said the king, a little quietened down.

"Maharaj, I can do the miracle," said the old physician, "But, for that, you'll have to leave your daughter with me for as long as I need to keep her for the treatment. Secondly, neither the king nor the queen should visit her until the treatment is over. Only at intervals, a messenger can come to my house, see the child and report back to you her progress. If you agree to these conditions then I'll be..."

As there was no other alternative possibility of saving his daughter, the king agreed to the condition.

The baby-girl was taken to the physician's house which was made as comfortable as a palace. The treatment started.

After a month, the messenger came to see the baby. The physician said that he had gathered most of the flowers except for a few rare ones. So, they must wait for some more time.

A few more months passed. The messenger came again. The

physician explained that there were twelve rare flowers which would bloom only once every three years. So he must wait for them.

A few years passed by. The king was getting anxious and impatient. The old physician said that he required a few roots which were found only in the ice-capped mountains of the Himalayas. And the ice on the mountains melts once every four years. So, he has to wait for it to melt.

For years the child underwent the treatment of the divine remedy, which was nothing but the remedy of love and care and respect. After twelve long years, the princess was brought back to the king and the queen.

As the princess walked across the court-hall, long black tresses swung on her waist and her teeth sparkled like white pearls!

The king and the queen could not believe her to be their own daughter!

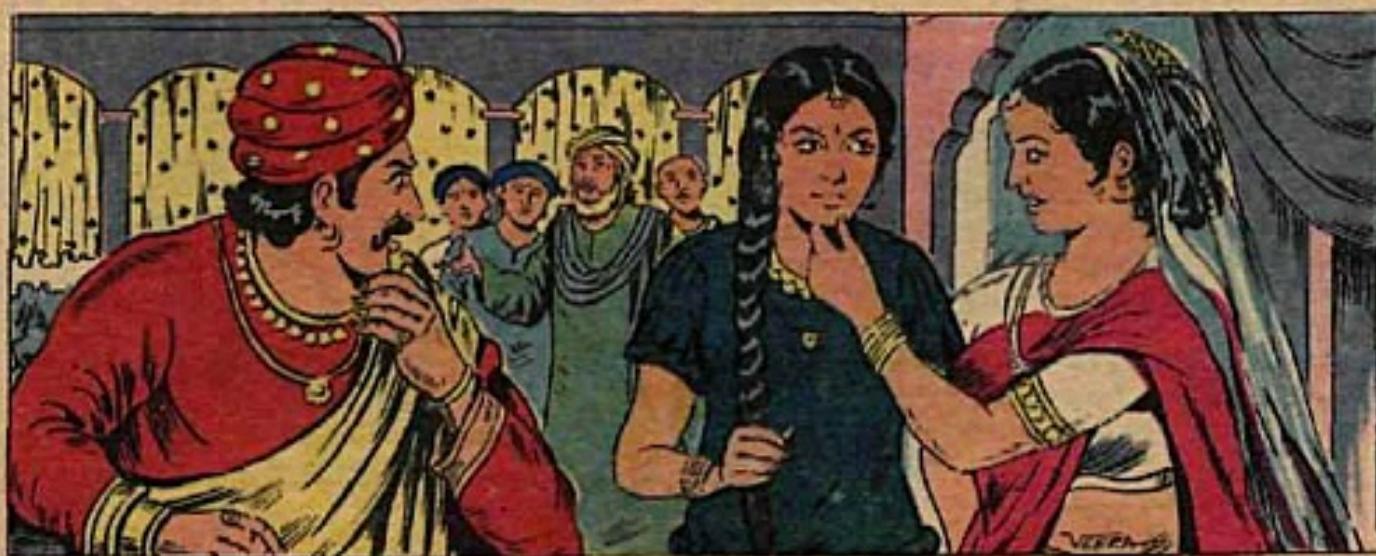
The king welcomed her, calling, her "My darling Sukeshini," because he was impressed by her hair.

The queen embraced her daughter, naming her, "Sudantini," because she marvelled at her daughter's lovely teeth.

Ultimately, they compromised on the name "Sudehini" for, their daughter was indeed beautiful. Everyone in the court agreed with the unique name.

The old man was made the chief physician of the court and amply rewarded for his love's labour.

Surely, there could not be anymore foolish queen and king than the parents of Sudehini who later came out to be as intelligent as she was beautiful.



Underwater Sharpshooters

These are the archerfish, who hit their prey with unerring accuracy from below the surface of their watery home

Gliding beneath the surface of the water, the fish took aim and fired. A stream of liquid shot from its mouth and struck an ant on a leaf with pinpoint accuracy. Into the lake toppled the ant... and another morsel of food was on its way to the fish's stomach.

The aquatic hunter that is able to perform this feat is the archerfish. There are several kinds of these, all able to project water from their mouths and knock insects into the water.

The best known is *Toxotes jaculatrix* which lives in the fresh waters of Java and other islands of the Malay archipelago.

Archerfish were unknown in the scientific world until 1764 when the Royal Society was told about them in London. But it was not until 1926 that the secret of their spitting ability was unravelled.

Two American experts examined specimens. They found that in the top of the fish's mouth there is a groove which acts like the barrel of a rifle when the fish's tongue is pressed against it.

By compressing the gill covers, the archerfish can shoot out several jets of water in swift succession, upto a distance of about a metre.

Another mystery concerning this fish remains unsolved. How can it hit its out-of-the-water target from beneath the surface of a lake so accurately?

As light rays bend when they enter the water, the prey would be seen by the fish in a position

that was not its true one. Yet, in some uncanny fashion, the archers manage to hit their victims with great accuracy.

This accuracy was demonstrated by about 150 archerfish kept at an aquarium in the USA. Crowds used to enjoy watching them spitting for their food.

For this, the water in their tank was lowered. Attendants threw finely ground meat so that it stuck on the glass too high for the fish to reach. They could only get it by washing it down with a



water bombardment.

At first, the fish tried to reach the meat by jumping for it. When this proved to be impossible, they all spat at it until all of the meat—about one-third of a pound—was washed off the glass.

Rapid Firing

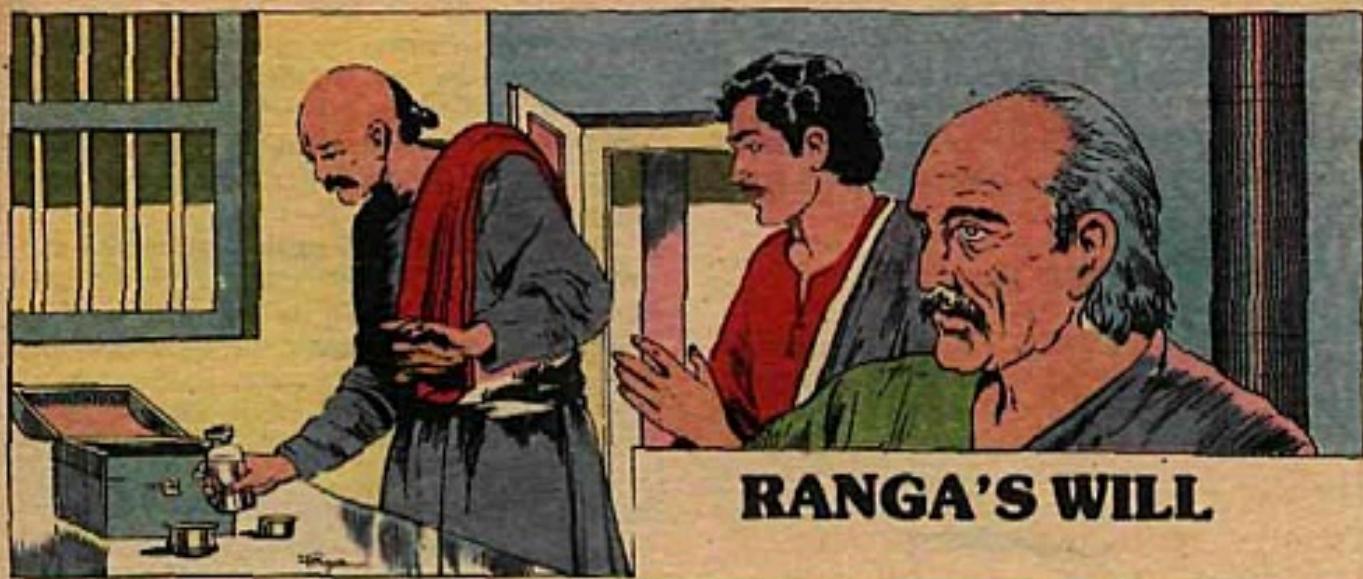
Archers are not always accurate. A target half a metre above the water may often be missed

by a small margin. However, the shot that follows will be right on its target.

Some archers can fire with the rapidity of a machine gun, while others can propel only a single shot. This ability varies with their size, age and rate of growth.

Archers can live in fresh, brackish or salt water. They can reach a length of 20 centimetres and are said to be good to eat. Fortunately, large numbers survive to demonstrate their skill as underwater sharpshooters.





RANGA'S WILL

He was in his advanced old age. It was but natural that Ranga Raju was losing his senses. His eyes were covered with a thick layer of cataract. His vision got blurred and he was almost blind. His independent movement had become more difficult because added to his near-blindness, he was becoming near-deaf. Ranga Raju was disheartened and dejected.

One day he called his elder son Nataraj and said, "Dear Nataraj, I've become too old to be able to help you in your business. With God's Grace your work is prospering. I would like to live the rest of my life quietly."

"Yes, father, you have done a lot for us. We shall do everything in our capacity to make your remaining days happy and peaceful," replied Nataraj.

"Dear son, do me a favour. I am getting almost blind. Get my eyes treated," entreated the father.

Nataraj laughed it away saying, "Why all the operations and the unnecessary expenses on the treatment of your eyes? We will look after your needs."

Ranga Raju sighed. But he kept pleading with Nataraj until Nataraj called a physician who happened to visit the village. Be it the talent of the physician or the good luck of the old man, very soon Ranga Raju's condition improved. He could go about without anybody's help.

One day, the second son Shivenath's wife told him, "Your elder brother has succeeded in curing the blindness of father-in-law. He will be favoured more than you unless you too please him. Why don't you try

to get his deafness cured?" she said it so loudly that even the half-deaf Ranga Raju could hear!

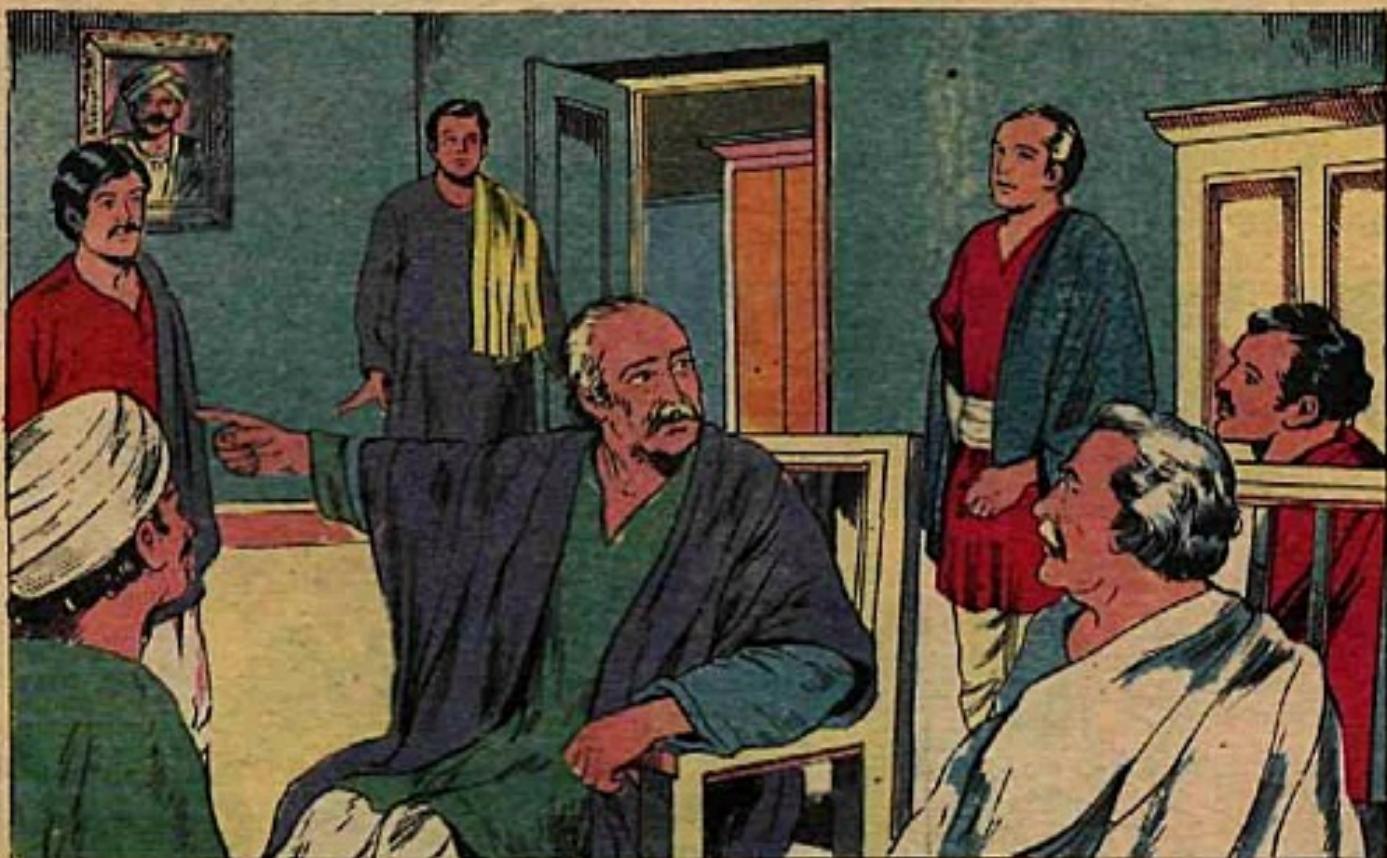
Shivnath was pleased with his wife's suggestion. He invited a well-known doctor from the city, made him to stay at his house as long as it was required. Ranga Raju was soon cured of his deafness.

The sons felt sure that the father was happy with them. But after a few months, when the old man prepared his will, he did not give a single rupee to either of his sons. Nataraj and Shivnath were shocked. They

went to the wise men of the village and complained against their father.

One of the wise men came home and spoke to Ranga Raju about the will. "Why have you taken such a hasty step, Ranga Raju? It seems to me quite unfair. Your sons have brought you back two great gifts of life—sight and hearing—and you have given them no part in your property! How is this a wise decision? Explain to me," the wise man said.

"No doubt, my sons have brought me back my sight and hearing. But now I regret hav-



ing got them back. I can see all the disharmony at home, and hear all the quarrels between the sons and their wives! So, I thought that it is best to donate my property to some public cause rather than leave it to my sons," said Ranga Raju in a sad tone.

The two sons felt ashamed and had nothing to say in defence of themselves and their demands.

"Do not feel sad, my dear sons," said Ranga Raju again, "It is but natural that children always take care of their old parents. But if they do so with a view to inherit the property, it is not true love. It is in order to make you realise this that I had cooked up this story of the will," said the old father.

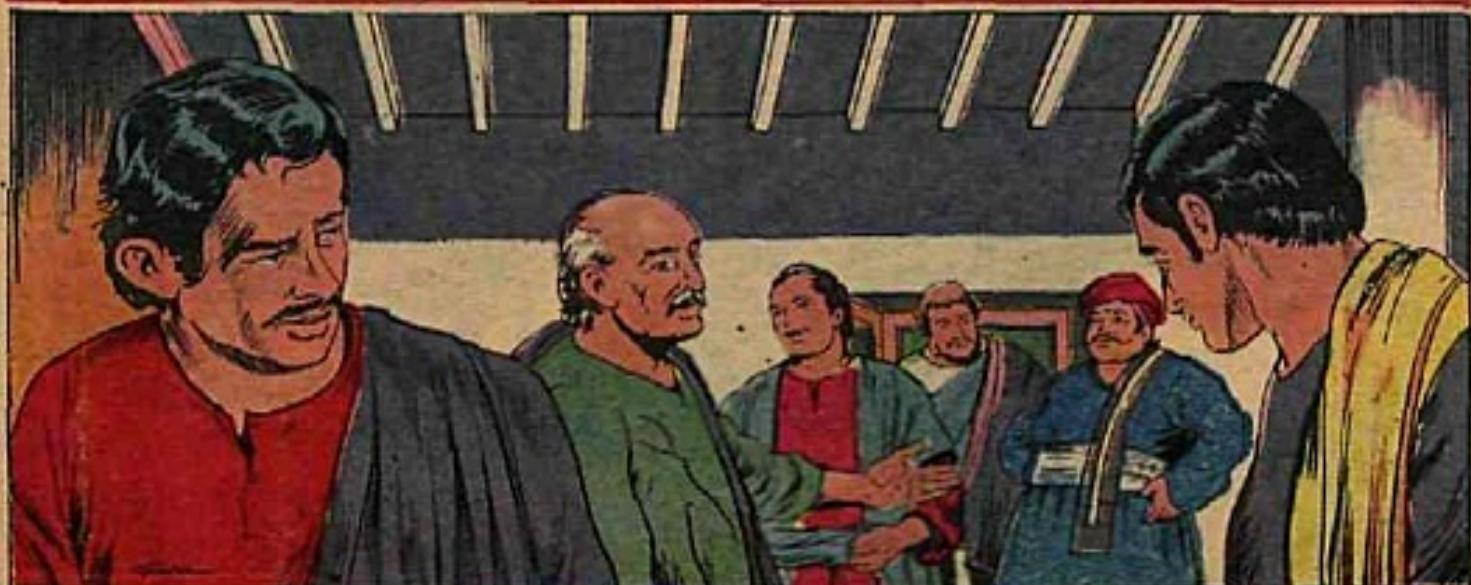
The wise man of the village and the two sons felt relieved.

"If you two had taken care of me without my having to plead for it, I would have felt happier. I would have then thought that you two really love me and not my wealth and property. However, it is never too late to learn," said Ranga Raju with a smile.

The two sons realised their selfishness and begged pardon from their father.

Ranga Raju was pleased that his trick had worked well. "What greater happiness can I have than to pass on my property to my sons and grandsons? Live a peaceful life amongst yourselves, and have love towards all. Wealth is not happiness; love is the true happiness."

Every one at home was happy with Ranga Raju's wisdom and they felt grateful to him.



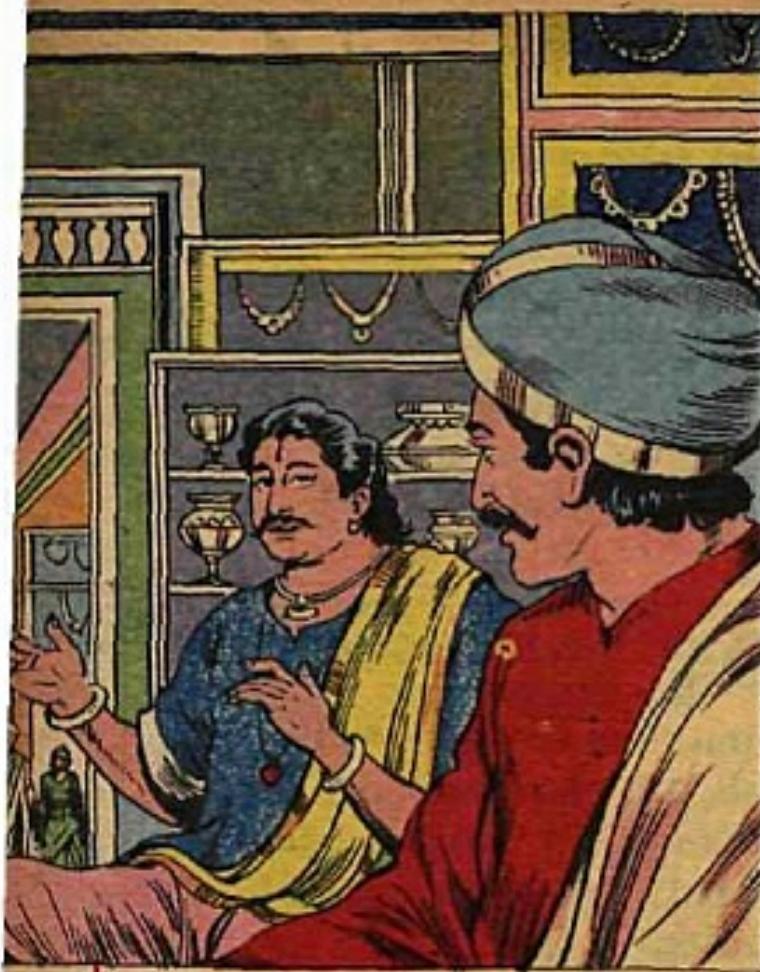


*New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire*

TWO DREAMS

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, is it under some instruction you received in your dream that you're taking such pains? But, take it from me, there are people who ignore the indications they receive in their dreams, even when the indications are quite clear. Let me cite an example to you. Listen to the story with interest. That might bring you some relief.



The vampire went on: In the city of Pratisthana lived a merchant named Shrigupta. Once every two years he went out on a voyage to faraway lands. His trade brought him much profit.

Once Shrigupta passed a night as the guest of his childhood friend, Mahindra, who lived in a small town named Jaypur. Mahindra too was a businessman, but he had never ventured into the sea. He owned a shop and lived happily with whatever profit he got out of it.

After dinner, Shrigupta told Mahindra, "My friend, you are intelligent as well as hard-working. How do you remain

content with a small business? I invite you to accompany me in my voyages. You need not carry any merchandise. Carry some money to buy things from distant lands. You can sell them here on handsome profit."

Then he laughed and added, "Once you get a taste of sailing abroad, you can remain content on the land no longer. You'll feel eager to accompany me everytime and I'll have the privilege of your company."

"Thanks for the idea, my friend, I'll think it over seriously," said Mahindra.

"I hope you've taken my suggestion seriously. I'll sail in three months. Hope to hear from you soon. I'll very much like you to take a positive decision," said Shrigupta.

After Shrigupta left, Mahindra thought over the proposal for long. At last he gathered some capital and set out for Pratisthana. He had decided to participate in the voyage.

It used to take a full day to reach Pratisthana. Mahindra walked for hours at a stretch. Tired, he lay down under a tree.

It was noon. Nearby was a lake. The cool breeze brought him sleep. He dreamt an usual

dream: A few furlongs off the shore a golden boat dazzled on the water. It appeared as if the boat was loaded with costly things. Mahindra was tempted to reach it. He jumped into the water and started swimming in the direction of the boat.

He was about to reach the boat when a witch-like creature began pulling him, holding on to one of his legs. He struggled to get his leg free, but had no success.

"Who are you? Why do you pull me down?" he asked.

"My name is Misfortune. I have waited for long for a chance to get hold of you. I've got you at last!" the creature said gleefully.

Mahindra remembered God and prayed to be saved and gave a jerk to his leg. He woke up at that point.

Mahindra sat thoughtful for half an hour. Then he stood up, but instead of walking in the direction of Pratisthana, he walked towards Jaypur, his home-town.

It rained on the way. He had to walk slow, often taking shelter to protect himself from the fury of the wind. It grew dark before he had covered half the



distance to Jaypur. He decided to pass the night in an inn.

It was a pleasant night. The inn-keeper spread a bed for him *on the verandah and he fell into a sound sleep.*

He dreamt that he was swimming again in the direction of a golden boat. But he felt extremely tired and could not beat his hands against the water. He would have been drowned if not for someone lending him a helping hand.

Raising his head on the water, he found the helper to be a being like a goddess.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"My name is Fortune," she

replied. Then she helped Mahindra to reach the boat.

On board the boat, Mahindra saw it filled with such items in which he himself traded. The items were arranged in the very manner he displayed them in his shop. But the quantity of items in the boat was much more than in his shop.

He woke up. He strolled before the inn till dawn broke out and then he returned home.

The Vampire paused for a moment and then asked King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King, if Mahindra decided against going on a voyage after

the first dream, why did he not change his decision after the second dream? If the first dream indicated misfortune, the second dream certainly indicated good luck! Does it not show that he was either fickle-minded or afraid of the sea? O King, answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

King Vikram replied forthwith: Mahindra was neither fickle-minded nor afraid. We have to take note of two significant facts. The first dream came to him when he was on his way





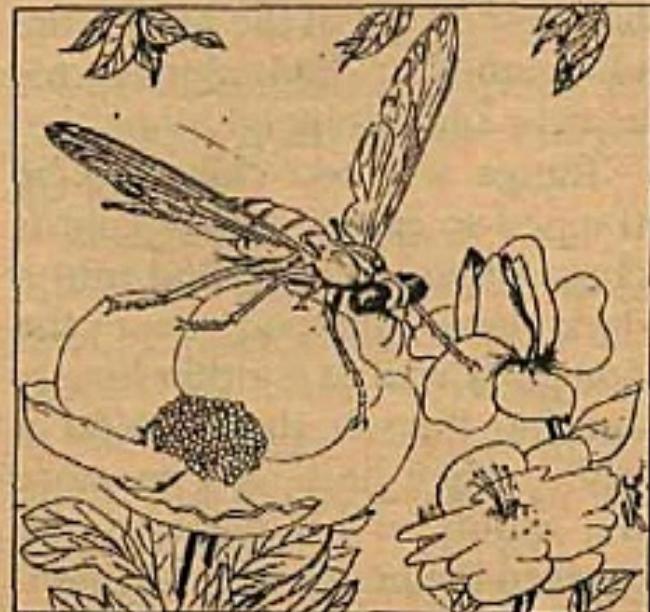
to join the voyage. It indicated that misfortune awaited him in that direction. The second dream came to him when he had abandoned the idea of joining the voyage and was going home to continue in his old business. The dream indicated that his fortune lay in his homeward journey.

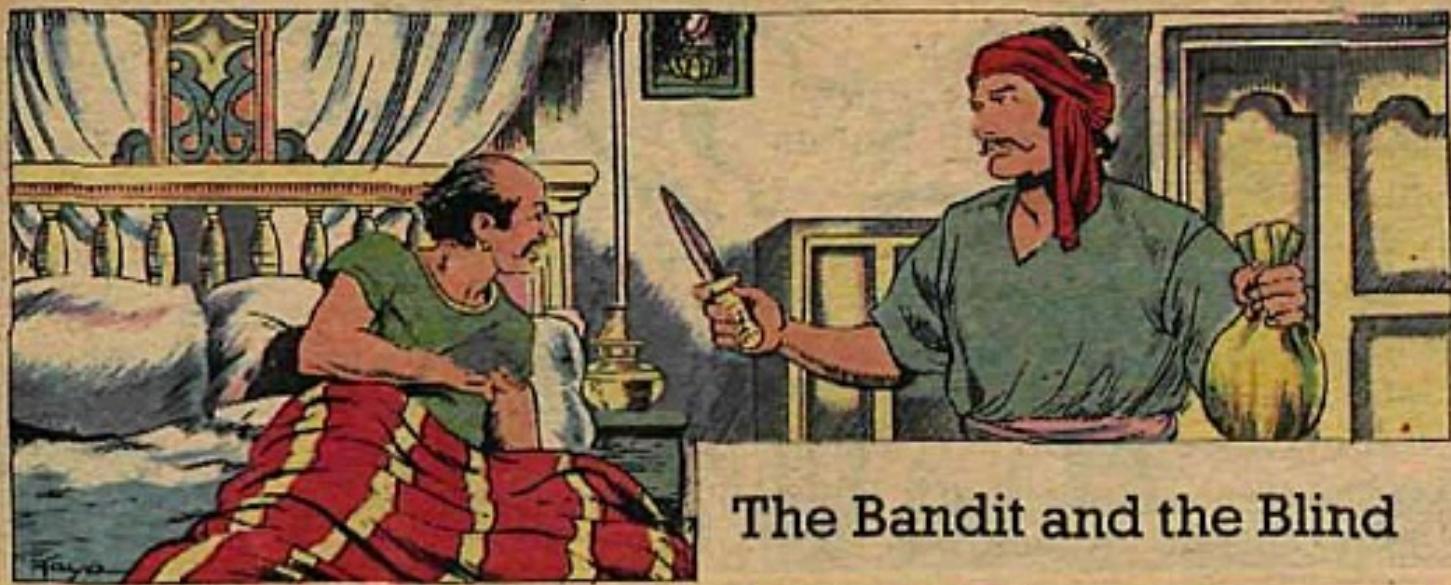
"Secondly, he saw the boat

filled with items in which he traded. In other words the boat was the symbol of his shop. That he saw the items in greater quantity in the boat indicated that the future of his business was bright."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





The Bandit and the Blind

Thief! Thief! Catch him!"

The old man shouted from his bed. A group of neighbours got alerted and chased the thief.

Ranga was a seasoned thief. He had broken into the zamindar's house and stolen from the safe a bag of gold jewellery. As he was about to escape the zamindar had woken up. He wanted to catch the thief, but, Ranga had threatened him with a dagger. As soon as the thief had dashed out of the house, the old zamindar had alerted his guards and his neighbours.

Ranga was too clever to be trapped so easily. As the guards chased him, he vanished into a dark lane, jumped over the boundary wall of another house, and hid himself there. After a while, when he heard no more the shouts of his pursuers, he entered the house with an inten-

tion to steal some more things.

He saw an old man sitting on his couch. As he approached him in order to gag him, the old man said, "I hear some footsteps. Is it you Sundar, my son?"

Ranga guessed that the old man must be blind and he replied, "No, uncle, I am Sundar's friend."

"O! Is he still wasting his time with his friends? When will he learn to return home early at night?"

"Uncle, Sundar asked me to tell you that tonight he might come very late, as he is held in his business affairs."

"I know very well his dirty business affairs," said the old man.

The thief then went to the adjacent room, kept there the bag of jewellery and his dagger

and put on the clothes of Sundar. He came out of the room and told the old man:

"I'm going out for a short walk. Will you please close the doors of your house? I shall be back as soon as Sundar returns. I have some work with him."

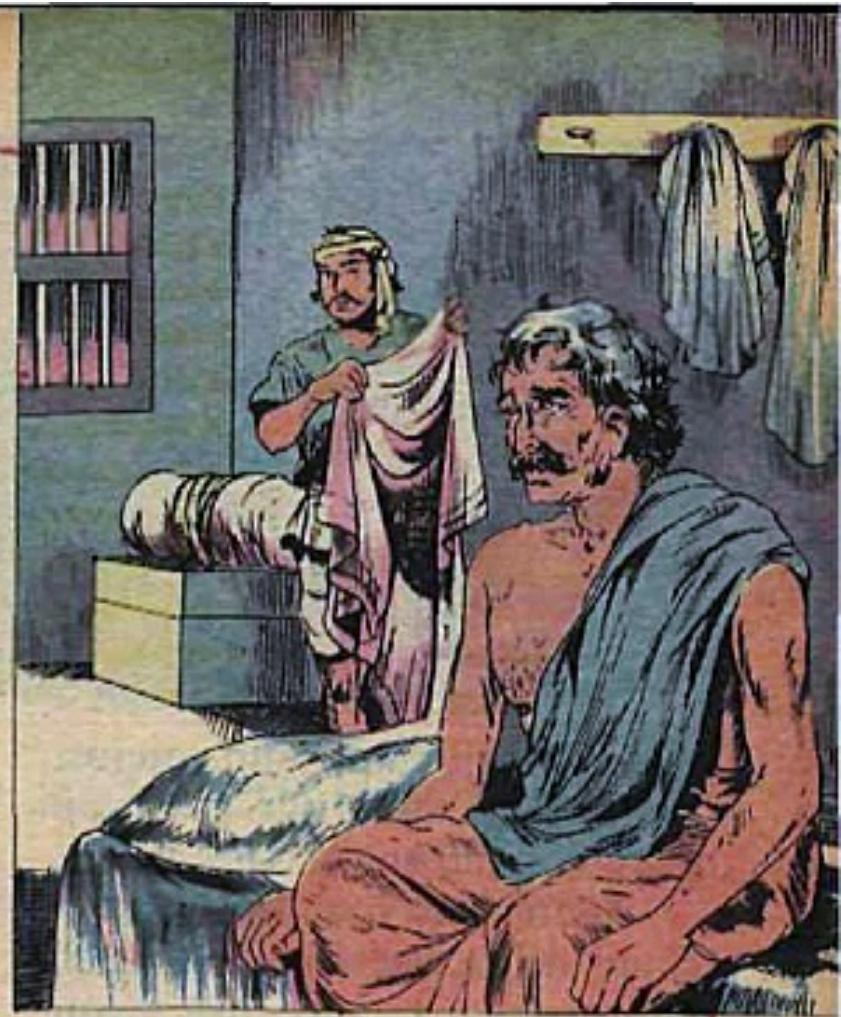
"There is no need to close the doors. If I fall asleep I will not be able to wake up when my son or you return. Better leave them open," replied the old man.

"But, uncle, what if a thief comes into your house through the open doors?" asked Ranga.

"What harm will the thief do me or what will he take from a poor man's house? On the contrary, the thief might feel pity on me and give me something!" replied the old man, half-seriously.

Ranga came out into the street sure that nobody would suspect him in his gentlemanly clothes. Just as he stepped on the street, a group of villagers, who were still hunting for the thief, saw him. "Who are you? Why are you in the street at this time of the night?" asked one of them, surprised to locate a stranger at that hour.

"I am Sundar's friend. I have come to give some message to



his father," replied Ranga.

"Let's confirm the truth of it by asking the old man," said someone from the group.

Ranga went into the house along with the others, fully confident of himself.

"Sir, do you recognise this young man? Is he a friend of your son?" asked an elderly gentleman.

The old man replied, "Yes, I recognise this man—he is a thief. Fifteen minutes back he entered my house with a big bag in one hand and a dagger in the other. He has kept them in the adjacent room."

Ranga was taken aback. "Are



you not then blind? Did you just pretend all the while that you were a blind man?" he asked.

"There was nothing better I could do in the circumstances. Otherwise, I am sure, you would have harmed me and looted my house!" said the old man.

The thief tried to escape, but, it was not possible to do so. The guards caught hold of him and tied him up with a rope.

"I'll not forget your treachery. I shall come back some other day and take my revenge on you," said Ranga,

grinding his teeth.

"Young man, you need not do that. Look, a thief turned me into a weakling and a blind man, but, the good people of the society have given me strength and my vision. So, it is good company that brings out the best in a man and, it is bad company that makes a man a beast!"

Sundar was back in the meantime. He had indeed been negligent of his old father because of his old friends. His father's words worked like magic on him. He soon mended his habits.

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AS IS THE KING, SO ARE THE PEOPLE

There was widespread lawlessness in the kingdom of Pratapgarh. Poverty and unhappiness was leading to violence and the kingdom was in the danger of a general revolt. King Bhimsen and his ministers were unable to find any way out of the situation.

The neighbouring kingdom Raniganj presented a completely different picture. Happiness, prosperity and peace reigned supreme in the kingdom. King Amarsingh was envied by the neighbouring kings.

King Bhimsen decided to visit Raniganj and learn from King Amarsingh the secret of his success.

King Amarsingh greeted King Bhimsen with all the cordiality

and courtesy and made him feel happy and at home.

"What is the secret of your success in ruling your kingdom so well?" asked Bhimsen at the first opportunity.

"It is my noble people," replied Amarsingh. "It is they who have worked hard and created this wealthy and happy kingdom. All credit for the peace and prosperity goes to them." said the host.

King Bhimsen felt happy on hearing this. He felt comforted that at least he was not to blame for the troubles in his country. "The people themselves are responsible for the bad state of affairs in Pratapgarh," he told himself.



"If you want, I can take you through my kingdom, and you could see for yourself whether what I have said is true or not," offered King Amarsingh.

Next day, both the kings disguised themselves as travellers and secretly set out to see the kingdom. But even then, the people recognised King Amarsingh and greeted him with all humility and love. King Bhimsen was pleasantly surprised. He asked one of the shopkeepers, "How do you recognise your king when he is so well disguised?"

"We love our king very much. That is why we can recognise

him in any disguise," replied the shopkeeper.

At another shop, King Amarsingh chose a few articles for taking home. The shopkeeper refused to accept any payment, saying, "Your Majesty, we feel very privileged to have you here today. Please accept these articles as a token of our gratitude and love for you."

King Bhimsen was fully convinced of what King Amarsingh had told him. He returned to his kingdom. A week later he decided to visit his own people and see their attitude toward him.

He was completely disappointed and disheartened. The people did not recognise him at all. They even gave him some difficult moments. At one shop when he enquired about the price of an article, the shopkeeper quoted him an unusually high price. King Bhimsen asked him, "If your own king were to purchase this article from you, what price would you quote?"

"I would quote him ten times its normal price," said the shopkeeper.

The king was shocked at this attitude of the shopkeeper.

After returning to his palace, King Bhimsen called his minis-

ters and told them of his sad experience with his people. "What is the best way to make our people as good as the people of Raniganj? Think well and tell me tomorrow," said the king.

"The best way," suggested the chief minister next day, "is to send a selected few of our people to Raniganj and to let them experience for themselves the goodness and the wisdom of those people.

Accordingly, about fifty people from different walks of life were selected and sent to Raniganj. King Amarsingh gave them all the facilities to go and visit his kingdom and to meet his people.

They returned to Pratapgarh after two weeks. They met King Bhimsen and said:

"Maharaja, Raniganj is indeed a splendid place. There is wealth and wisdom, prosperity and peace everywhere. The secret of all that success is the king himself, King Amarsingh!"

"How can it be?" questioned King Bhimsen with a note of annoyance and disbelief in his voice. "King Amarsingh himself told me that the secret of his success is the people and not



himself!" he observed.

"Maharaja, it is the humility of King Amarsingh that made him praise his people. It is his humility that has won him the goodwill and the love of his people," replied the leader of the group.

"Well, how do you account for the fact that the people could recognise their king even in disguise, whereas, our people could not recognise me even though I was without any disguise?" questioned King Bhimsen.

"An object of gold can be sorted out even from dust and sand. The credit does not go to

the person who picks it up, but to the object itself!" replied a gold-merchant with a note of humility in his voice.

The king was beginning to see some reason in what the people were saying.

Another farmer added, "Maharaja, King Amarsingh is not only humble and good, but also constantly thinking of ways and means to improve the lot of his people. He sacrifices for that all his luxury and food and sleep, if it is so required. It is this deep concern for the people's welfare that has won him their full confidence. With such faith in each other they have achieved wonders."

"Maharaja, people follow always their leaders and their king. As is the king, so are the people," concluded the leader of the group.

King Bhimsen was by now fully convinced of what the people had said. Next day, he held a meeting of all his ministers and told them:

"The basic cause of all the unrest and unhappiness and poverty in our kingdom is in ourselves. We can no more continue to throw the blame on the people. They reciprocate largely what their leaders and king do and feel for them. From now on, unless we are all ready to lay our lives for their welfare, we have no business to continue in our present positions."

Sincere efforts at improving the law and order of the kingdom followed. The people of Pratapgarh felt very soon the difference in the atmosphere. Within two years, the kingdom of Pratapgarh was well on its way to peace and prosperity.





RIVERS OF INDIA: The Narmada

The Maiden Who Became A River

The Maikal hills were a wonderful place. Nature smiled over it in all her splendour and serenity. There was no human locality around it. Gods and fairies frequented the region. All the seasons found their finest expressions there.

Once Lord Shiva paid a visit to the hills. He loved the place so much that he sat there in meditation. A long time passed. He never made a movement. The divine charm of his serene pose was indescribable. Nature around Him marvelled at it.



A time came when something amazing happened. The beauty of calmness and grace which the Lord exuded suddenly took the form of a beautiful girl. Springing to life, she bowed down to Lord Shiva and said, "Father, grant that I will ever remain free and happy!"



"Let it be so," said Lord Shiva and He named her Narmada—the tender-hearted one. Narmada frolicked in the forest amidst the riot of flowers—herself like the guardian-deity of the land of flowers. She was as swift as the cool, scented breeze of the region.

Deer, peacocks and other creatures of the forest were her companions and playmates. She giggled and laughed and played hide-and-seek with them. Days passed joyously and her presence enriched the grandeur of the hills.



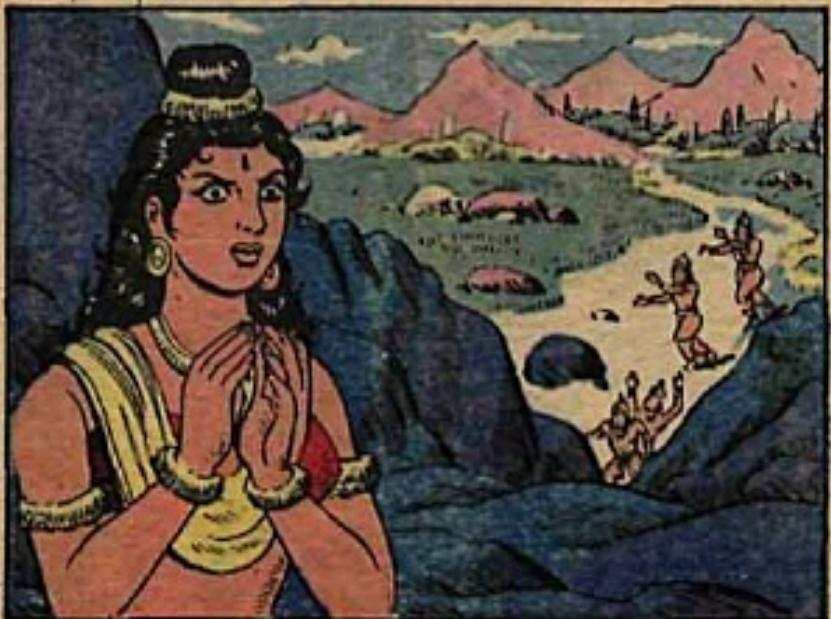
But the gods who often visited the hills saw this wonderful maiden. They were fascinated. They were never tired of spying upon her when she was playing with her playmates. They followed her wherever she went—unknown to her.

A time came when the gods could not check their temptations to befriend Narmada. They approached her. But she was in no mood to talk to them lest any of them should like to marry her. She was determined to remain free forever.



The gods chased her. Swift as lightning, she evaded them. From nook to nook of the Maikal hills they ran; time and again the gods were about to lay their hands on her when she slipped away.

The chase went on for a long time. Then Narmada climbed a hill-top. The gods were now hopeful that she cannot get away. Enthusiastically they made a beeline for her. She looked at them and looked to the other side of the hill. She hesitated for a moment.





Suddenly she changed into a cascade and flowed into the other side of the hill. The gods looked on, helpless. Narmada the maiden became Narmada the river. Passing the hilly region, she flowed across the plains till she met the sea near Broach, flowing through Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Since time immemorial the Narmada has been looked upon as a sacred river. Great Rishis have done their penance on her banks. Devotees undertake *Parikrama* of the river. That is to say, they trek all the way from Amarkantak, its origin, to Broach and then cross over to the other side and return to Amarkantak.



At Amarkantak is to be seen the temple dedicated to Goddess Narmada, the presiding spirit of the sacred river. She has been a source of strength and solace for thousands of devotees. Amarkantak is a place of pilgrimage.

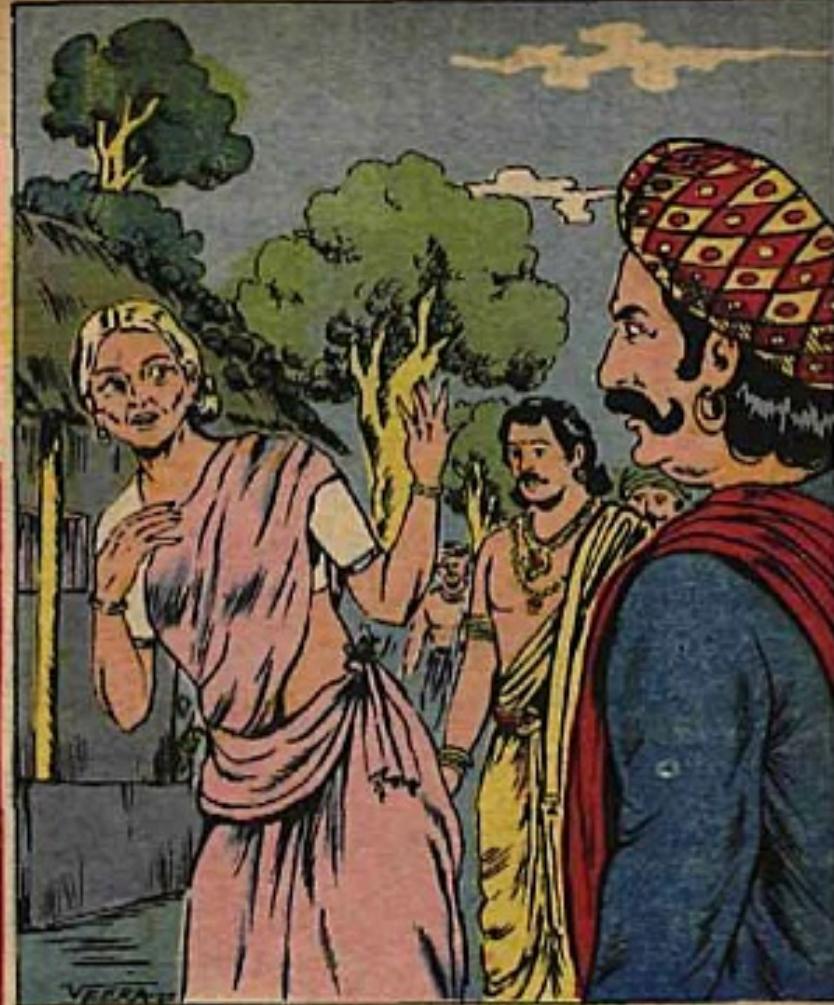
A KING'S QUEST

There was a palace, an ancient and majestic one. Seven generations of kings had lived in it and ruled over the vast kingdom of Zahirabad.

During the rule of King Ujwal, the palace was neglected and gradually it lost its beauty and charm. The dust of the bygone years was already eating into the walls of the palace at some places, but, with the utter negligence of King Ujwal, it now looked more like bright ruins than a living palace.

King Ujwal postponed the repair from year to year until a time came when he felt that trying to repair it would be useless. "It is better that I go and live elsewhere," felt the king.

At an early opportunity, he set out, with his minister and a few guards, in search of a suitable place. The riverside offered him the most serene and lovely spot. The fresh breeze of the valley, the cool waters and the thick woods on its banks pleased the king very much. He decided



to build his new palace there.

The chief minister of the king, Amitsen, saw a small hut in the shade of a big banyan tree. When he went close to the old dilapidated hut, an old lady came out of it and smiled at him.

"Granny!" You must leave this place. We have a different plan for it!"

"Why should I leave a place where my ancestors going back to seven generations lived?"

"You'd be paid enough money and another ground!"

"How can they make up for my love for this place?" I'll not allow my hut to be removed. It

might look very old and broken down but it is my heritage!"

"The king has chosen this charming place for building a palace. You have to leave!" said the minister in a stern voice.

"You may remove me forcibly. But once a palace comes up here, it shall be a charming place no more!"

Amitsen lost his temper and ordered his soldiers, "Pull down the hut! If the old lady does not want to come to an understanding, it is her loss!"

King Ujwal, who was watching the situation, came forward and asked the minister to withdraw his orders.

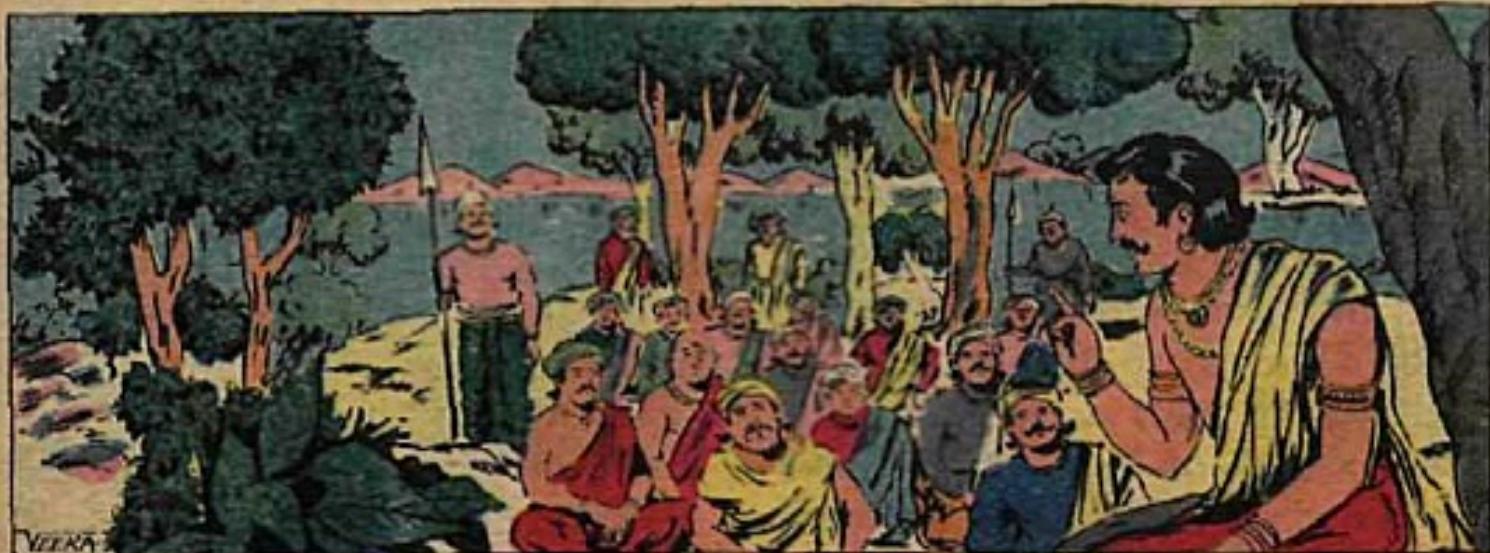
"Amitsen, I'm really fortunate to have met this venerable lady. I'm proud to see someone like her. I'm happy to see her sense of pride in her ancestors, and her concern for the beauty

of this place. I've learnt my own lesson."

All stood surprised.

"It is true that I love this place and I shall visit this place again and again. But I shall not build a palace here. I will see to it that the palace I've left behind gets its full due of honour and care," the king explained to his minister and the others.

True to his words, the king passed more and more time in the forest. His subjects who loved him would gather around him and would feel happy to talk to him. The king himself was no less happy in listening to their stories and experiences. But he never allowed anyone to spoil the beauty of the place. "Let's all enjoy the bounty of nature—but nobody should harm its peace and splendour!" he would say from time to time.



LAUGH WITH NASRUDDIN

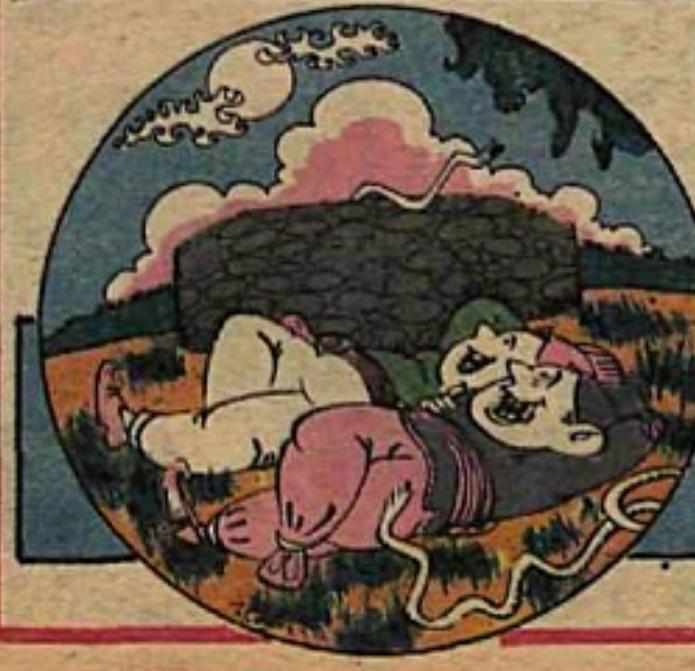
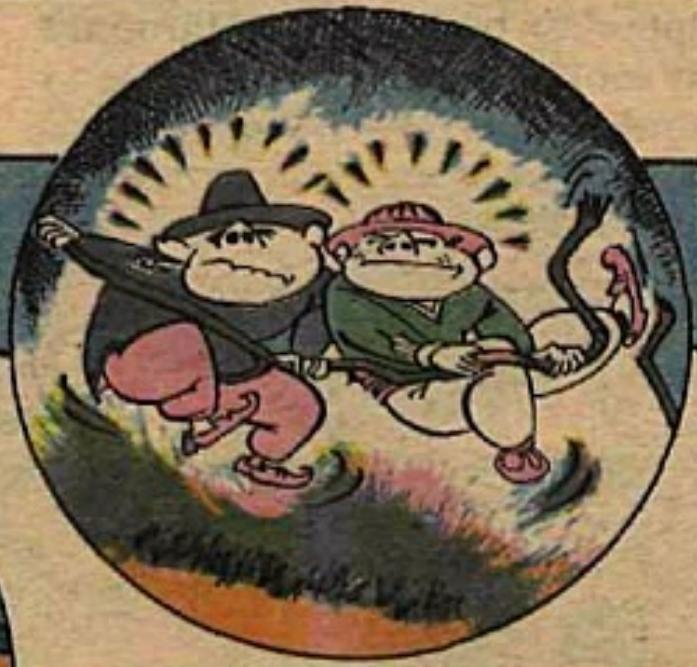
MOON'S GREAT LEAP

This happened when Mulla Nasruddin was a small boy. Showing the reflection of the moon to a friend in a well, he said, "Poor moon has fallen in the well!"



"Let us rescue the moon!" suggested Nasruddin. The two boys tied a hook to a rope and lowered it. The hook got stuck to a stone. They pulled the rope together.

They pulled and pulled with all their might. The rope snapped. The two boys fell flat on their back on the grassland.



Now their eyes went to the moon in the sky. "Thank God, our pull flung the moon up to its right place!" said a beaming Nasruddin.

The Gloomy Sunday.

“Japan attacks America! Japanese airplanes bombard American warships at Pearl Harbour!”

Hawkers selling special editions of newspapers shouted out this incredible incident! It was the 7th of December, 1941, a gloomy Sunday.

How could Japanese airplanes fly for such a long distance to bomb Pearl Harbour? It took some time for people to understand how it happened—

how huge Japanese ships bore the airplanes on their decks in a daring voyage till they came close enough to Pearl Harbour—how the airplanes then took off and sunk two costly American warships instantly and damaged six more irreparably and set the entire harbour on fire.

The news sounded incredible to anyone who heard it. But two friends sitting in a corner of a restaurant looked at each other in utter disbelief—because of



some other reason. A lady had told them that Japan will attack the United States of America on the 7th of December that year!

The two friends had laughed at the prophecy made by Mrs. Jane Savage, a housewife at Lakeland, Florida, who had no pretension to any kind of supernatural knowledge. But she said that one evening in the year 1918 a strange being appeared before her and outlined the shape of several things to come. After the being's disappearance, Mrs. Savage wrote down whatever she remembered of the being's statements.

Those who were closer to her and had known how true her

earlier prophecies had been, had ceased to feel surprised.

Among her many predictions are concerned the British royal family. She had said that King Edward VIII would abdicate in order to marry according to his wish which his mother and the church would not approve. This came true. King Edward gave up his throne in order to marry Miss. Simpson.

Most of her predictions concerned America and they have come true. A number of predictions concern the future. One is, Japan would totally disappear in the ocean.

We fervently wish that this would prove untrue.



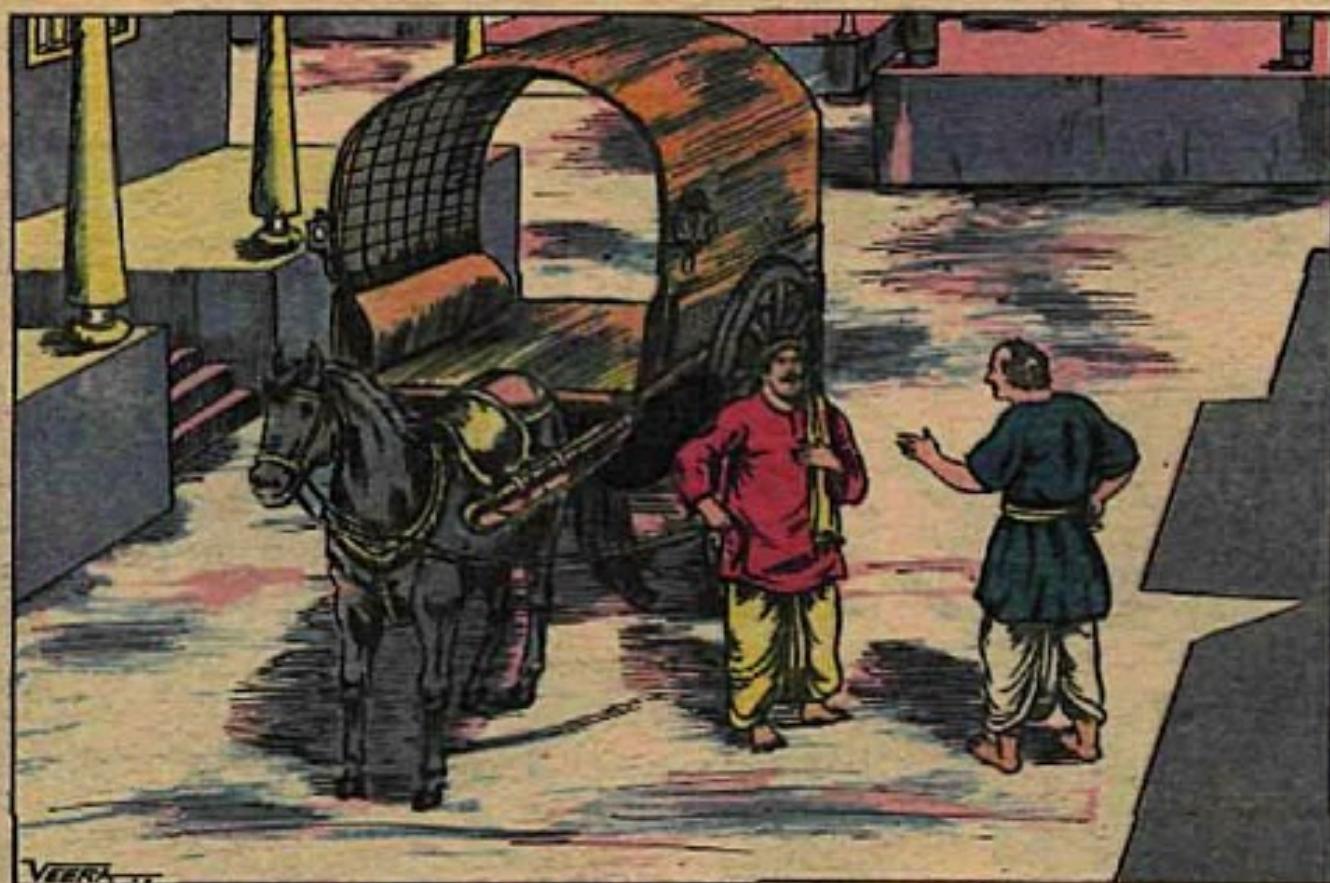
A ROARING BUSINESS

Ramlal and Madanlal were two good friends who lived in the village Laxmanpur. One day, Ramlal was in urgent need of money. So, he sold off his horse and carriage to Madanlal for one hundred rupees. After a few weeks, when he acquired some money, he purchased the horse and the carriage back from Madanlal for two hundred rupees.

After a few weeks, Madanlal was in need of a horse and carriage. So, he bought Ramlal's for three hundred rupees. Such exchange of hands between Ramlal and Madanlal went on till the price of the horse and the carriage reached eight hundred rupees.

One day, wanting to earn more money, Ramlal sold off the horse and the carriage to a businessman from the neighbouring village for one thousand rupees.

When Madanlal came to know of this sale, he was very disturbed. He went to Ramlal's house and said angrily, "Ramlal, what a blunder you have done by selling away the horse-carriage which used to bring us a lot of profit! You are absolutely ignorant of the secrets of business. You are unpardonable! In course of time we two could have sold them to each other for ten thousand and more—with all the profit to ourselves!"





THE TEST FOR THE PALMIST

Narayan Shastri was an eminent palmist of Cherakpalli village. He was honest and hardworking though poor. He cared neither for money nor for power.

Once his wife suggested that his clients be asked to pay a fixed fee. Narayan Shastri replied, "Palmistry is a sacred lore. People come to me with great respect in order to receive some helpful guidance. If I put upon it some conditions or if I exchange my knowledge purely for money, then I would be degrading my learning. Whatever they give in appreciation of my service, that is all right for me."

Such was his great respect and veneration for his learning. He preferred to remain poor rather than become rich by fixing a price-tag on his knowledge.

As years passed, his fame and name reached the king of the land. King Sudhakar had in his court experts in all shastras except one in astrology. So, he thought of employing Narayan Shastri. But, before doing that he wanted to satisfy himself with the talent of the astrologer. So, he asked his minister to send for Narayan Shastri.

Messengers reached Narayan Shastri's house and informed him that the king wants to see him immediately. The astrologer's wife became happy that at last her husband's talents were being recognised by the king and that soon they will be out of their poverty.

After thinking for a short while, Narayan Shastri told the messengers, "Till now, all those who have wanted my guidance have come to my house. I've not



gone to anyone's house myself. Tell this to the king."

The neighbours and his wife were stunned at Narayan Shastri's audacity. They felt sure that misfortune and sorrow were the lot of this obstinate astrologer. His wife kept crying for days apprehending the king's wrath.

The king too got disturbed on hearing Narayan Shastri's reply. But, he quietened down after a while and discussed with his minister about the plans to visit the astrologer.

After ten days, the king came to Narayan Shastri's house, along with his minister and his guards. Everyone was taken by

surprise and did not know how to receive the king. The wife of Narayan Shastri was all nervous and she sweated from head to foot on seeing the royal guest entering her house.

But Narayan Shastri was quiet and undisturbed. He received the king with a gentle smile, requested him to sit down on the mat and asked him for the purpose of his visit.

On coming to know the king's purpose, the astrologer took the king's palm and studied it for some time.

Slowly his face turned grave. He concentrated on his guest's palm even more intently. Suddenly, he picked up the palm-leaf manuscript and threw it away. As if that was not enough, he asked his wife to set fire to those stacks!

The king, seated before him, was apparently surprised at his erratic behaviour. "What's gone wrong with you, Narayan Shastri? Why are you so angry?" asked the king.

"Maharaja," said Narayan Shastri, "All these years I thought that I had good knowledge of palmistry and astrology. But today, on seeing your hand, I have come to realise

that I know nothing of it and that all those books have misguided me."

"Can you explain what led you to such a conclusion?" asked the king.

"Maharaja, I am sorry to say that the lines on your palm show no royal signs. They should belong to the hand of a man who should be serving you, if palmistry were to be true. But the facts prove otherwise. That is to say, even with such a hand you have become the king. I am confirmed that all my knowledge is false."

Just at that moment, one of the guards came forward, bowed down to Narayan Shastri and said:

"Sir, your knowledge of palmistry is indeed great and unsurpassable. The person sitting before you is not the king, he is

only his bodyguard. I am the king's minister and the king himself is disguised as the other guard," saying so, he bowed down to the king. The person who was dressed as the king also got up and bowed to the disguised king.

The king came forward and said, "Narayan Shastri, I'm really proud of you and your knowledge of palmistry and astrology. I had planned this little trick in order to test your knowledge. I am convinced of your knowledge as well as your honesty and sincerity as a true palmist. From today, you shall become my court-palmist."

As the king's party left Narayan Shastri's house, the neighbours, the wife and everyone in the village of Cherakpalli burst into joy and they celebrated the great day.



MALAPROPIST

"Grandpa, I am told that Adi Shankara was an incantation of Shiva. Is it true?" asked Reena.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Granpa Chowdhury, "You have become another Mrs. Malaprop, my girl! You're already using malapropisms!"

"What is malapropism, Grandpa?" joined in Rajesh.

"The word 'Malapropism' comes from the French, 'Mal Apropos.' It is the misapplication of words that have an accidental similarity in sound," answered Grandpa.

"Which word did I misapply, Grandpa?" enquired Reena.

"Instead of saying 'Adi Shankara was an incantation' you should have said, 'Adi Shankara was an incarnation,'" answered Prof. Chowdhury.

"Then, who is Mrs. Malaprop?" asked Rajesh.

"Mrs. Malaprop is a character in Sheridan's play, *The Rivals*. She is the one who makes constantly this kind of verbal confusion," replied Grandpa Chowdhury.

"So, the word 'Malapropism' must have been invented after the character, Mrs. Malaprop—am I right Grandpa?" questioned Rajesh.

"Right. But such use of words was there before also. However, this became notorious as Malapropism only after Sheridan's extensive use of it in his drama," explained the grandfather.

"Any other examples, Grandpa?" asked Rajesh.

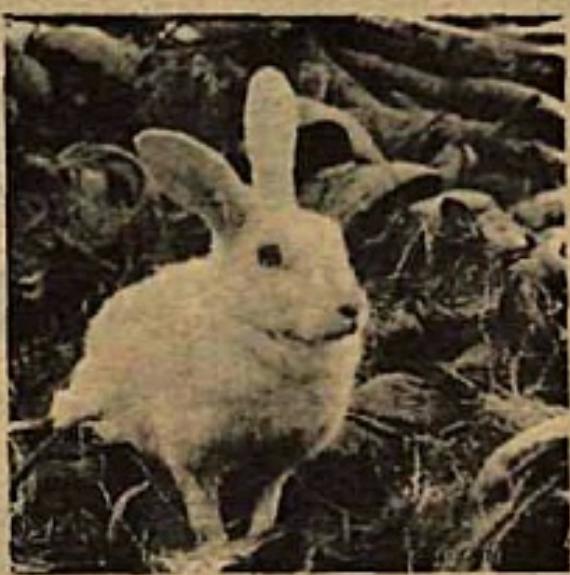
"Let me see.... Oh yes. 'Irritating the land' instead of saying 'irrigating the land'; 'abominable muscles' instead of 'abdominal muscles' and so on. But, tell me Reena, where is the Malapropism in what Mrs. Malaprop once said? She said, 'As headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile', " questioned Grandpa Chowdhury.

"Easy. She should have used the word 'allegator' instead of 'allegory', " replied Rajesh confidently.

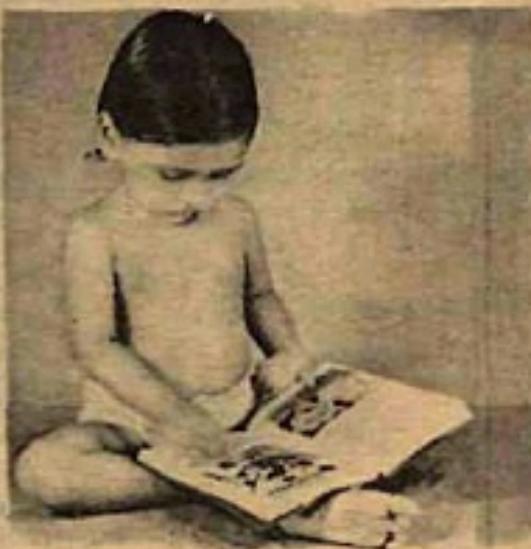
"Excellent, my boy, excellent," said Grandpa.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Subhash Sabnis



A. Govindaraju

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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The Winning Entry:—'Dramatic Posture' & 'Confidential Whisper'

PICKS FROM THE WISE

Argument is the worst sort of conversation.

— Jonathan Swift

City life: millions of people being lonesome together.

— Henry David Thoreau.

He liked to like people, therefore people liked him.

— Mark Twain.



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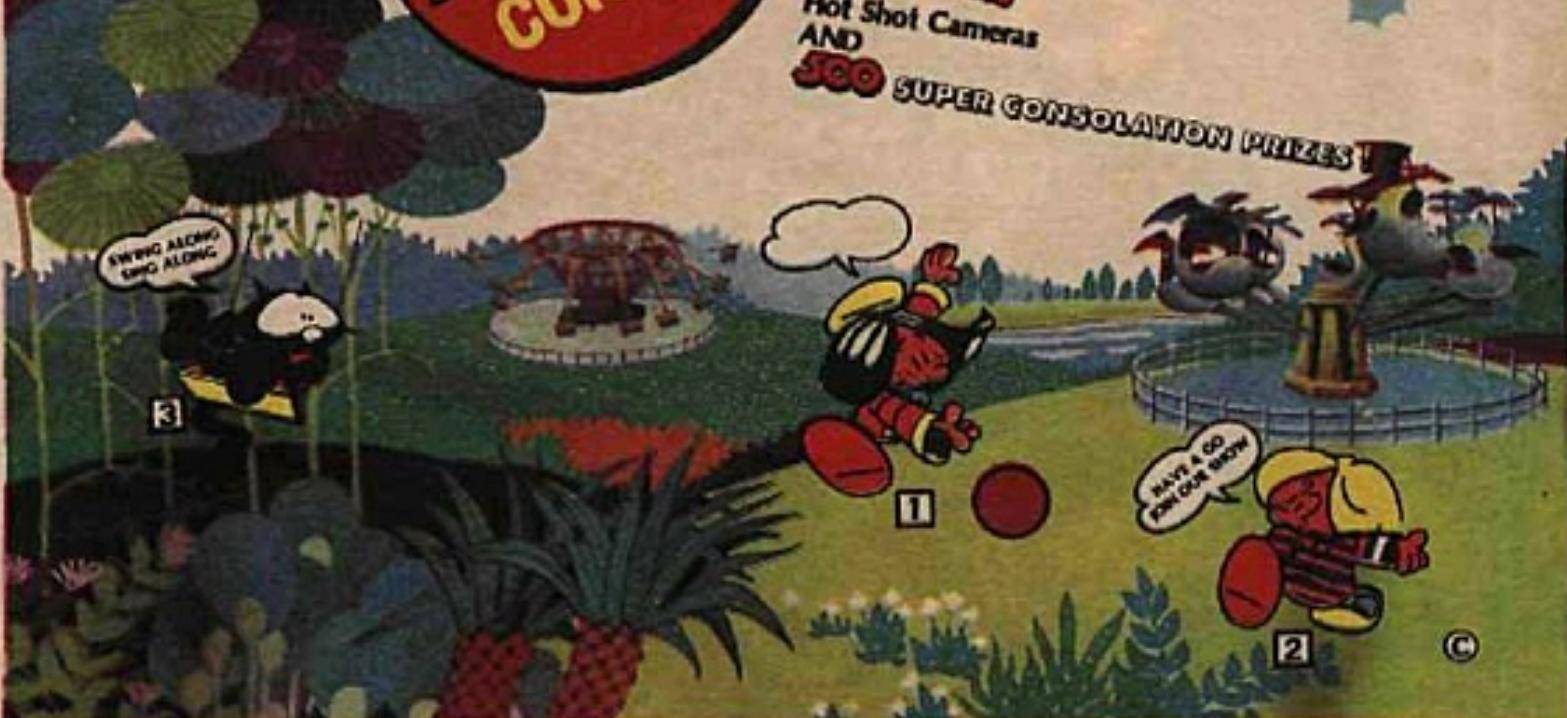
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